

[H.A.S.C. No. 113-126]

**THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY
FOR THE ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ
AND THE LEVANT**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD
SEPTEMBER 18, 2014



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

91-811

WASHINGTON : 2015

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, California, *Chairman*

MAC THORNBERRY, Texas	ADAM SMITH, Washington
WALTER B. JONES, North Carolina	LORETTA SANCHEZ, California
J. RANDY FORBES, Virginia	MIKE McINTYRE, North Carolina
JEFF MILLER, Florida	ROBERT A. BRADY, Pennsylvania
JOE WILSON, South Carolina	SUSAN A. DAVIS, California
FRANK A. LoBIONDO, New Jersey	JAMES R. LANGEVIN, Rhode Island
ROB BISHOP, Utah	RICK LARSEN, Washington
MICHAEL R. TURNER, Ohio	JIM COOPER, Tennessee
JOHN KLINE, Minnesota	MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, Guam
MIKE ROGERS, Alabama	JOE COURTNEY, Connecticut
TRENT FRANKS, Arizona	DAVID LOEBSACK, Iowa
BILL SHUSTER, Pennsylvania	NIKI TSONGAS, Massachusetts
K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, Texas	JOHN GARAMENDI, California
DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado	HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR., Georgia
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, Virginia	COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, Hawaii
DUNCAN HUNTER, California	JACKIE SPEIER, California
JOHN FLEMING, Louisiana	RON BARBER, Arizona
MIKE COFFMAN, Colorado	ANDRÉ CARSON, Indiana
E. SCOTT RIGELL, Virginia	CAROL SHEA-PORTER, New Hampshire
CHRISTOPHER P. GIBSON, New York	DANIEL B. MAFFEI, New York
VICKY HARTZLER, Missouri	DEREK KILMER, Washington
JOSEPH J. HECK, Nevada	JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas
JON RUNYAN, New Jersey	TAMMY DUCKWORTH, Illinois
AUSTIN SCOTT, Georgia	SCOTT H. PETERS, California
STEVEN M. PALAZZO, Mississippi	WILLIAM L. ENYART, Illinois
MO BROOKS, Alabama	PETE P. GALLEGO, Texas
RICHARD B. NUGENT, Florida	MARC A. VEASEY, Texas
KRISTI L. NOEM, South Dakota	TULSI GABBARD, Hawaii
PAUL COOK, California	
JIM BRIDENSTINE, Oklahoma	
BRAD R. WENSTRUP, Ohio	
JACKIE WALORSKI, Indiana	
BRADLEY BYRNE, Alabama	

ROBERT L. SIMMONS II, *Staff Director*
ALEX GALLO, *Professional Staff Member*
MIKE CASEY, *Professional Staff Member*
AARON FALK, *Clerk*

CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF HEARINGS

2014

	Page
HEARING:	
Thursday, September 18, 2014, The Administration's Strategy for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant	1
APPENDIX:	
Thursday, September 18, 2014	49

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY FOR THE ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ AND THE LEVANT

STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

McKeon, Hon. Howard P. "Buck," a Representative from California, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services	1
Smith, Hon. Adam, a Representative from Washington, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services	3

WITNESSES

Hagel, Hon. Chuck, Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, accompanied by LTG William Mayville, USA, Director for Operations, J-3, Joint Staff	5
--	---

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS:	
Hagel, Hon. Chuck	53
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:	
[There were no Documents submitted.]	
WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:	
[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]	
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:	
Mr. Carson	66
Dr. Fleming	64
Mr. Kline	63
Ms. Tsongas	63

**THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY FOR THE ISLAMIC
STATE IN IRAQ AND THE LEVANT**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, September 18, 2014.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:19 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON,
A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COM-
MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Before we begin, I will state up front that we intend to conduct this hearing in an orderly and efficient manner to ensure all members have an opportunity to ask questions and our witnesses have an opportunity to be heard. To that end, please be advised I will not tolerate disturbances of these proceedings, including verbal disruptions, photography, standing or holding signs. Thank you all for your cooperation. If there are disturbances, we will stop and have those who are disturbing leave the room.

The committee meets to receive testimony on the administration's strategy for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or ISIL. I would like to welcome Secretary Hagel, Lieutenant General Mayville, Director of Operations at the Joint Staff. General Dempsey is on a long-planned trip, meeting with his defense counterparts in Europe. Given the many crises in the world right now and the immense demands that they are placing on our military, General Dempsey is exactly where he should be.

I received a call from Secretary Hagel I think it was about a week ago. He said I am in, I think Tbilisi or whatever, Georgia, and I said, is that near Atlanta? He said, No, a different Georgia. And he was there, and then he was going to Turkey, and then he was coming back here, and then he just—it is really great to have you here today, Mr. Secretary, and I understand how busy you are and how much you are traveling. Really appreciate your time, what you, General Dempsey, what all of the men and women in uniform are doing to keep us safe and from harm.

Just yesterday the House, on a bipartisan basis and in large numbers, passed my amendment to the continuing resolution at the President's request which authorizes the Secretary of Defense to train and equip appropriately vetted elements of the Syrian opposition. We strengthened the proposal through congressional over-

sight, including detailed reporting and reprogramming requirements.

Although not everyone supported the authority, there was widespread agreement that ISIL is a threat to our allies and to the United States, apparently that ISIL—agreement that ISIL must be defeated, agreement that the landscape is incredibly complex and that any option will carry risk and agreement that the Syria train-and-equip authority is but one part of what should be a broader regional strategy to defeat ISIL.

I listened to the President's speech last week, and I talked with military experts, including those who know Iraq best. I traveled to the region earlier this month and got blunt answers from our allies and partners on what needs to be done. I do not believe the minimalist counterinsurgency strategy that the President has proposed is sufficient to achieve his objective to degrade and destroy ISIL.

I gave a speech at the American Enterprise Institute last week. I called for swift action, not the current "go slow" approach. For every week we wait, ISIL grows. We need to conduct military operations in both Iraq and Syria to deny ISIL any safe haven.

While the Kurds and Iraqi security forces are willing to fight and have some capability, they still need our trainers, our advisors, our command and control, our intelligence, our close air support, our special forces, the capabilities that only the United States can provide. None of us should minimize the risks. We cannot succeed from the safety of some headquarters building. Engaging those divergent groups and advising indigenous forces will put our military in harm's way.

This is a dangerous business. The most irresponsible thing that the President can do is give the military a mission but not give it the tools it needs to do the job. By taking options off the table, I fear the President is setting the mission and our military up for failure rather than success. I know when Eisenhower was planning the invasion of Normandy, one of his subordinates questioned some of the planning, and he said, "We are planning for success; failure is not an option." We are in that same situation today.

Today's hearing is important for us to understand the administration's strategy for ISIL. The President has identified his objective to degrade and ultimately destroy. We need to hear from our defense and uniformed leaders on what you believe will be required of the military to achieve that objective. We need to understand the campaign, the role our partners will play, the risks, the capabilities our military will need, and the consequences of inaction.

Mr. Secretary, General Mayville, again, thank you for being here during this consequential moment for our country. I look forward to your question and gaining answers to our questions.

I would like to point out that we have a staff member who is leaving us, Debra Wada. Is Debra in here?

Mr. SMITH. We can thank her anyway.

The CHAIRMAN. She already left? You already got her, huh? She is a professional staff member for the Subcommittee on Military Personnel for the House Armed Services Committee, a position that she has held since 1999. Ms. Wada served as the lead staff member for the subcommittee from 2007 to 2010 and briefly served as dep-

uty staff director for the committee in 2011. In 1999, Ms. Wada served as legislative affairs specialist for the National Parks Service. She served as legislative assistant for U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka, acting as the Senator's principal aide on national defense, veterans affairs, maritime issues, educational, social security, and welfare from 1987 to 1999. She received a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] from Drake University.

This sounds like an obituary. It is not. She is leaving to become the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Department of Defense, so we just got her ready to move down there for another very important job. She is still in the fight. So we want to point that out and thank her for what she is doing and wish her well down there for you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess it is not so much an obituary as we can just say she has been sentenced to a stint over at the Pentagon. So we wish her well and we will visit her from time to time.

Well, I thank you very much for being here, Mr. Secretary, General Mayville, and this is a very difficult moment for our country, because I think the best way to sum it up is our country simply wants this problem gone. You know, ever since 9/11 [September, 11, 2001], ever since we learned about this terrorist threat that is out there, the two wars that we fought, all the decisions that have been made, and believe me it wouldn't be hard for anyone to go back over those decisions and criticize them step by step from just about any point on the political spectrum and say, Why did we do this? Why did we do this? If only we hadn't done that, everything would be fine. But the bottom line is, this problem is not going away. I cannot personally imagine any set of decisions that we could have made in the last 13 years that would have made it just go away now.

I can certainly, you know, imagine ones that would have been better, and we can look back and learn about what was perhaps not a good decision, but the threat that we face, and ISIL is but one piece of it, is the ideological threat that we first came to understand with Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. It is an incredibly violent extremist ideology, attempting to hijack one of the world's great religions, and their ideology is very straightforward. They want to destroy us. The only thing that, you know, stops them from doing it is our efforts, the efforts of men like you and others and just the lack of capability. This threat exists, and we have to confront it, and every time a decision comes up, I really think a lot of the opposition is we just don't want to have to deal with it. But it is there, and we have to deal with it. The threat is real. It is not being made up, and ISIL is the latest manifestation of that threat. We have seen how just absolutely brutal and vulgar they are.

They have committed, you know, small-scale genocides every place they have gone. Anyone who doesn't believe what they believe

they kill and usually in the most brutal fashion imaginable. And they threaten us. Certainly they threaten the region first. There has been considerable debate about whether or not ISIL is a direct threat to us right now, and in a truly technical sense, they aren't, in the sense that they haven't been able to yet set up a system for plotting and planning attacks overseas, but I vividly remember, and this was a mistake I made along the way, when we were focused on Al Qaeda and we were focused in Pakistan, and for the longest time I said, Look, you know, Pakistan, Afghanistan, that is where it is at because any attack against western targets has always been plotted and planned out of that region.

And that was true until Abdul Mutallab showed up on that airplane in Detroit, and that one was plotted and planned out of Yemen, which showed that the threat can spread, and we have responded to that. We were responding to it at the time by working with the Yemeni Government and trying to confront the threat there. And make no mistake about it, if ISIL were to settle down and get secure territory in Syria or Iraq, I have no doubt that they would try to train fighters and send them back to attack targets in the West. Now anyone who wants to, you know, say that that wouldn't happen, I wish you were right, but you are not. Their ideology is clearly a threat.

So the question comes, how do we confront that threat? The one thing we can do even if we can't wish the problem away is we can learn from our past mistakes, and I think one of those mistakes and one of the areas that we need to change and move forward is the assumption that U.S. military might will fix this problem, and I understand that trap as well. You see a problem, you say by gum, we are not going to go at this at a halfway fashion, we are going to go get them because it is the American way; you win. You got a problem? You know what? We are going to go fix it. As the cliché goes, to a hammer every problem is a nail.

But the problem here is this ideology gains strength from over-Western aggression, militarization in the region. The strongest argument that Al Qaeda and ISIL have to present to the people they want to join them is that they are protecting Islam against Western aggression. That is how they present themselves.

Now, we understand that that is a—sorry, I was going to say something that isn't appropriate in a public hearing. That is not true, let's just put it that way, but that is their message. So when we show up with 150,000 troops in Iraq or 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, it is effective up to a point, but it also reinforces that message. And that is why I think the vote we took in the House [of Representatives] yesterday and the train-and-equip mission is so critical.

To win this fight, we have got to find partners, Muslim partners—in the case of ISIL, preferably Sunni partners—to work with to fight them. We have got to convince the people of the region that they need to fight this evil for their own sake. We were incredibly successful in the Anbar Awakening precisely because that is what we did. Yes, we had troops there, but we went in and we worked with the Sunni tribes in the Anbar region to convince them that Al Qaeda was evil, and then they took the fight.

That made a huge difference, and that is what we have to do here. That is why I think the train-and-equip mission makes so much sense, and it was a bit frustrating yesterday to listen to people who are concerned about it, didn't want to do the train-and-equip because they were concerned about, you know, U.S. military getting too engaged. They were in favor of the bombing, but they didn't want to do the train-and-equip, and I understand how those issues can become conflated, but train-and-equip is how we get us out of the fight. It is how we develop a capable force, and we have seen this succeed against ISIL in Iraq. We have seen the Kurds, who were a broken force until we showed up, provided some arms and trained them, and they have now turned the tide and are actually starting to take back territory from ISIL because we helped them.

Similarly, the Iraqi Government, a totally, totally broken force. Now, I have an argument, people say, well, gosh, here we go again with train-and-equip. We trained and equipped the Iraqi military, and how did that work out? The primary reason that didn't work out is because the Sunnis in the Iraqi military chose not to fight for [Iraqi Prime Minister] Maliki. I don't know whether they were a capable force or not, because they didn't even fight because the Maliki government became sectarian and corrupt and didn't support the Sunnis, so we insisted on a change in that government. Now we have a new Iraqi Government that is at least trying, initially, a power-sharing arrangement that can bring some of the Sunnis in.

So we have Sunni partners now who are going to lead that fight. So when we go after ISIL, the one big point, it has got to be locally driven, we have got to find local Sunnis who are willing to do that. So we could go rushing in and bombing and dropping a whole bunch of U.S. troops in there, and we would simply exacerbate the problem. We have got to be smart about how we build local support to confront ISIL, but make no mistake about it, they are a threat. One of those I wish we didn't have to think about it, I truly do. It involves money, it involves putting lives at risk, it involves difficult military decisions. I wish that there wasn't a threat from ISIL and this ideology, but we have learned in the last 20 years that there clearly is. We have to come up with a plan for confronting it, and I look forward to hearing from the Secretary and the General today about how we are going to keep working on that plan, implement it, and move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Secretary.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK HAGEL, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, ACCOMPANIED BY LTG WILLIAM MAYVILLE, USA, DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS, J-3, JOINT STAFF

Secretary HAGEL. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, members of the committee, I very much appreciate the opportunity this morning to discuss the President's strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

Mr. Chairman, on a personal note, I want to thank you for your leadership on yesterday's vote. I believe, the President believes, that that vote was a very important and defining vote, and we are

not unmindful of the work that you and others on this committee invested in that vote and getting the turnout that you did. So thank you.

Yesterday I joined President Obama at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa where he received a briefing from the commander of U.S. Central Command [CENTCOM], General Austin, on operational plans to implement our ISIL strategy and met with representatives while I was there, as did the President, from more than 40 partner nations.

I am joined here today, as you have noted, Mr. Chairman, by the Joint Staff's Director for Operations, Lieutenant General Bill Mayville. He is our J-3 [Joint Staff, Operations], and General Mayville helps oversee, among many of his responsibilities, our military operations in Iraq, the Middle East, and in CENTCOM, and works closely with General Austin and CENTCOM to develop all of our military plans. So I appreciate very much General Mayville being here.

And as you noted, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Dempsey is with our partners internationally over the next few days, and as you noted, he should be. Much of that discussion will be about the Middle East, specifically Iraq and Syria. He consults with our allies in this fight against ISIL and tomorrow will attend a special NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] Chiefs of Defense conference in Lithuania where they will be focused on the ISIL challenge.

The Defense Department civilian and military leaders, Mr. Chairman, are in complete agreement with every component of the President's strategy, and we strongly believe it offers the best opportunity to degrade and destroy ISIL. The President, Chairman Dempsey, General Austin, and I are in full alignment on all of our objectives and our tactics and our strategy, that military strategy necessary to achieve the President's objective. However, as President Obama has repeatedly made clear, American military power alone cannot eradicate the threats posed by ISIL to the United States, our allies, and our friends and partners in the region. Iraq's continued political progress toward a more inclusive and representative government will be critical to achieving our objective.

We believe that Iraq's new Prime Minister is committed to bringing all Iraqis together against ISIL. To support him and the Iraqi people in their fight against ISIL, against terrorists, the special coalition that we are assembling will need to use all of its instruments of power—military, law enforcement, economic, diplomatic, and intelligence—in coordination with the countries in the region.

To succeed, this strategy will also require a strong partnership between the executive branch and Congress. The President has made it a priority to consult with congressional leadership on the ISIL challenge, as have Vice President Biden, Secretary Kerry, and many senior members of the administration.

I appreciate the opportunities I have had to discuss our strategy with members of this committee, including you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Senate and the House over the last couple of weeks, and we will continue with these consultations.

ISIL poses a real threat to all countries in the Middle East, our European allies, and to America, as you have noted, Mr. Chairman, as has Congressman Smith.

In the last few months the world has seen ISIL's barbarity up close as its fighters advanced across western and northern Iraq and slaughtered thousands of innocent civilians including Sunni and Shi'a Muslims and Kurdish Iraqis and all religious minorities who stood in their way. ISIL's murder of two U.S. journalists outraged the American people and exposed the depravity of ISIL's ideology and tactics, exposed those tactics and that brutal ideology to the world.

Over the weekend we saw ISIL's murder of a British citizen. ISIL now controls a vast swath of eastern Syria and western and northern Iraq, including towns and cities in these areas. ISIL has gained strength by exploiting the civil war in Syria and sectarian strife in Iraq. As it has seized territory across both countries and acquired significant resources and advanced weapons, ISIL has employed a violent combination of terrorist, insurgent, and conventional military tactics.

ISIL has also been very adept at deploying technology and social media, employing this to increase its global profile and attract tens of thousands of fighters. Its goal is to become the new vanguard of the global extremist movement and establish an extremist Islamic caliphate across the Middle East. It considers itself the rightful inheritor of Osama bin Laden's legacy.

While ISIL clearly poses an immediate threat to American citizens in Iraq and our interests in the Middle East, we also know that thousands of foreign fighters, including Europeans and more than 100 Americans, have traveled to Syria with passports that give them relative freedom of movement. These fighters can exploit ISIL's safe haven to plan, coordinate, and carry out attacks in United States and Europe. Although the Intelligence Community has not yet detected specific plotting against the U.S. homeland, ISIL has global aspirations, clearly has global aspirations, and they have so stated.

And as President Obama has made clear, ISIL's leaders have threatened America and our allies. If left unchecked, ISIL will directly threaten our homeland and our allies. In his address to the Nation last week, President Obama announced that the United States will lead a broad multinational coalition to roll back ISIL's threat and defeat ISIL. More than 40 nations have already expressed their willingness to participate in this effort and more than 30 nations have indicated their readiness to offer military support. President Obama and Vice President Biden, Secretary Kerry, and I and others are working to unite and expand this coalition.

At the NATO summit in Wales, Secretary Kerry and I convened a meeting of key partners in this coalition. I then went to Georgia and Turkey, as you noted, Mr. Chairman. The Georgians made clear they will help. Turkey, by virtue of its geography and its common interest in destroying ISIL, and I might note an indispensable member of NATO from the beginning of NATO. We know that Turkey is now in the grips of ISIL holding nearly 50 of its diplomats.
[Disruption in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. The chair notes that there is a disturbance of the committee's proceedings. The committee will be in order. The committee will stand in recess until the Capitol Police can restore order.

The gentleman will proceed.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you. As I was noting, ISIL is currently holding nearly 50 Turkish diplomats hostage, and this obviously is a high and first priority of the Turkish Government to get those hostages back, and in my conversations with President Erdogan and other leaders in Turkey, we talked specifically about that, but also the important role Turkey will play in our overall efforts in this coalition.

Secretary Kerry convened a meeting in Jeddah [Saudi Arabia] last week with foreign ministers from the six Gulf Cooperation Council states, also Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, and all 22 nations of the Arab League adopted a resolution at their summit in Cairo calling for comprehensive measures to combat ISIL.

Earlier this week in Paris, President Hollande of France, who traveled to Iraq last weekend, hosted a conference attended by the U.N. [United Nations] Security Council permanent members, European and Arab leaders, and representatives of the EU [European Union], Arab League, and United Nations. They all pledged—they all pledged to help Iraq in the fight against ISIL, including through military assistance. Other key allies such as Australia, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom are already contributing military support, and other partners have begun to make specific offers.

At next week's U.N. General Assembly, we expect that additional nations will be making commitments across the spectrum of capabilities, building on the strong Chapter 7 U.N. Security Council Resolution adopted last month calling on all member states to take measures to counter ISIL and to suppress the flow of foreign fighters to ISIL. Also next week, President Obama will chair a meeting with the U.N. Security Council to further mobilize the international community.

As you all know, former International Security Assistance Force [ISAF] commander and acting CENTCOM commander, General John Allen, has been designated to serve as special Presidential envoy for the global coalition to counter ISIL. General Allen will work in a civilian diplomatic capacity to coordinate, build, and sustain the coalition, drawing on his extensive experience in the Middle East. He will work closely with General Austin of CENTCOM to ensure that coalition efforts are aligned across all elements of our strategy.

In his address to the Nation, the President outlined the four elements of this strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. Let me now describe how we are implementing this whole-of-government approach. First, in close coordination with the new Iraqi Government, we are broadening our air campaign against ISIL targets to protect Americans threatened by ISIL and advances that ISIL is making and also to prevent humanitarian catastrophe. The U.S. military has already conducted more than 170 successful air strikes. These strikes have disrupted ISIL tactically and helped buy time for the Iraqi Government to form an inclusive and broad-based governing coalition led by the new prime minister. That was one of President Obama's essential preconditions for taking further action against ISIL because the Iraqi people, the Iraqi people must be united in their opposition to ISIL in order to defeat them. This is ultimately their fight.

The new broader air campaign against ISIL targets will enable Iraqi security forces, including Kurdish forces, to continue to stay on the offensive and recapture territory from ISIL and hold it. The President of the United States has the constitutional and the statutory authority to use military force against ISIL in Syria as well as Iraq. Because ISIL operates freely across the Iraqi-Syrian border and maintains a safe haven in Syria, our actions will not be restrained by a border that exists in name only.

CENTCOM's plan includes targeted actions against ISIL safe havens in Syria, including its command and control, logistics capabilities, and infrastructure. General Dempsey and I have both approved and spent considerable time reviewing and adapting the CENTCOM plan which General Austin, as I noted, briefed to the President in Tampa yesterday.

The second element of the strategy is to increase our support for forces fighting ISIL on the ground, not American forces, but forces, Iraqi forces fighting on the ground. To support Iraqi and Kurdish forces, the President announced last week that we would deploy an additional 475 American troops to Iraq. Part of that number includes approximately 150 advisors and support personnel to supplement forces already in Iraq conducting assessments to the Iraqi security forces. This assessment mission is now transitioning to an advise-and-assist mission with more than 15 teams embedding with Iraqi security forces at the headquarters level to provide strategic and operational advice and assistance.

By the time all these forces arrive, there will be approximately 1,600 U.S. personnel in Iraq responding to the ISIL threat. But as the President reaffirmed yesterday in Tampa, American forces will not have a combat mission on the ground. Instead, these advisors will continue to support Iraqi and Kurdish forces, including the government's plans to stand up Iraqi National Guard units. These units are to help Sunni communities defeat ISIL in their area. The best counterweights to ISIL are local forces and local citizens, the people.

As you know, in June, the President asked Congress for the necessary authority for DOD [Department of Defense] to train and equip moderate Syrian opposition forces and \$500 million to fund this program. And again, we appreciate yesterday's House vote to amend the continuing resolution with language authorizing this train-and-equip program. Saudi Arabia will host the training program for this mission, and the Saudis have offered funding and additional assistance with recruiting and vetting. The \$500 million request the President made in June for this train-and-equip program reflects CENTCOM's estimate of the cost to train, equip, and resupply more than 5,000 opposition forces over one year.

This is the beginning of a multiyear, scalable effort designed to eventually produce an even larger opposition force. The package of assistance that we initially provide would consist of small arms, vehicles, and basic equipment like communications, as well as tactical and more advanced training. As these forces prove their effectiveness on the battlefield, we would be prepared to provide increasingly sophisticated types of assistance to the most trusted commanders and capable forces.

The goal is not to achieve numerical parity with ISIL, but to ensure that moderate Syrian forces are superior fighters trained by units. Our goal is to undercut ISIL's recruitment and to enable the Syrian opposition to add to the pressure ISIL is already facing from the Iraqi security forces and the security forces of Kurdistan.

We want to force ISIL into a three-front battle against more capable local forces. A rigorous vetting process will be critical to the success of this program. DOD will work closely with the State Department, the Intelligence Community, and all of our international partners and in the region to screen and vet the forces we train and equip. We will monitor them closely to ensure that weapons do not fall into the hands of radical elements of the opposition, ISIL, the Syrian regime, or other extremist groups.

There will always be risks, Mr. Chairman. There are risks in everything. There are risks in action and there are risks in inaction, but we believe the risk is justified, given the real threat ISIL poses to this country and to the region and to our allies and the necessity of having capable partners on the ground in Syria.

As we pursue this program, the United States will continue to press for a political resolution to the Syrian conflict. Assad has lost all legitimacy to govern. He has created the conditions that allowed ISIL and other terrorist groups to gain ground and terrorize and slaughter the Syrian population. The United States will not coordinate or cooperate with the Assad regime.

The third element of the President's strategy is an all-inclusive approach to preventing attacks from ISIL against the homeland of the United States and our allies. In concert with our international partners, the United States will draw on intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic, and economic tools to cut off ISIL's funding, improve our intelligence, strengthen homeland defense, and stem the flow of foreign fighters.

The United States and our allies have been stepping up efforts to identify and counter threats emanating from Syria against our homelands. This includes increased intelligence sharing, working with DOD's partners at the National Counterterrorism Center, the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], and across the Intelligence Community.

Our terrorist screening and analytical databases now have special threat cases linking together known actors and potential foreign fighters, making it easier and faster to update them regularly with new information. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson has directed enhanced screening at 25 overseas airports with direct flights to the United States, a step that the United Kingdom and other countries have already taken.

The Departments of Justice and Homeland Security have launched an initiative to partner with local communities to counter extremist recruiting, and the Department of Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence is working closely with coalition partners to disrupt ISIL's financing and expose their financing activities.

The final element of the President's strategy is to continue providing humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians displaced or threatened by ISIL. Alongside the Government of Iraq, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, France, U.S. troops have already de-

livered life-saving [aid to] thousands of threatened Iraqi civilians on Mount Sinjar and the Iraqi town of Amerli.

Our total humanitarian assistance to displaced Iraqis is now more than \$186 million for fiscal year 2014. The United States is also the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance for the millions of Syrians affected by the civil war. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, the United States has committed almost \$3 billion in humanitarian assistance to those affected by this war.

All four elements of this strategy require a significant commitment of resources on the part of the United States and our coalition partners. This effort will not be easy. This effort will not be brief. This effort will not be simple. We are at war with ISIL, just as we are at war with Al Qaeda, but destroying ISIL will require more than military efforts alone. It will require political progress in the region and effective partners on the ground in Iraq and in Syria, and as President Obama said yesterday in Tampa, we cannot do for the Iraqis what they must do for themselves. We can't do for them, but this is an effort that calls on America's unique, our unique capabilities and abilities and responsibilities to lead. As the Congress and the administration work together, we know this effort will take time. The President has outlined a clear, a comprehensive, and a workable strategy to achieve our goals and protect our interests.

Mr. Chairman, members of this committee, thank you. Thank you for your continued support, your partnership, and what you do for our men and women in uniform who protect this country. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Hagel can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Will the General have an opening statement?

General MAYVILLE. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. You outlined a lot of things. I think the President's stated objective to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL is a very worthy goal, and I think you have outlined a lot of things that he plans to do in that area, yet the only thing he has asked Congress for—I presume he will be coming for other things, but so far all he has asked is for the train-and-equip. We acted on that yesterday. The Senate, I understand, will act on that today. So I think that is a good message that we are trying to work together. We are all Americans and we have one common enemy, and that should unite us and unite us strongly.

I was glad to hear you say that you are all united, your team, all the military leaders. It was reported that General Austin's military advice was to send a modest contingent of American troops to advise and assist in Iraq, more than the President I think has decided to do. Is that an accurate report?

Secretary HAGEL. What I would tell you, Mr. Chairman, is, as you know, and I think the President has been very clear, and certainly General Dempsey made this clear 2 days ago in our hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. First, the President expects from his military leaders an honest, direct evaluation of what they think and what is required to implement strategies that

will protect this country. There were a number of recommendations on a number of things based on the questions the President asked of our military leaders. I will tell you this: General Austin, as I have said, is in full agreement with the President's decisions on the resources the President has decided to use to implement that strategy, and General Austin made that very clear again yesterday with the President when the President was in Tampa to get—spent the day there with General Austin and his commanders to get a thorough briefing of the plan. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. There is one thing that I am going to give you, give the President some advice through you. I think it is very important that he does follow the advice and counsel that he receives, the professional advice of the military. They are the ones best suited to do that. I realize he is Commander in Chief, he has the final say and the final obligation and responsibility. I would also request that he not take options off the table. It seems to me every speech he gives, the first thing he says is no boots on the ground, and then makes an announcement of sending more boots.

I think that that is confusing to the American people, and I think it builds distrust rather than understanding of what he is really saying. I think no boots on the ground, I think people are thinking divisions and full-bore thing that we originally did in Iraq, shock and awe. I understand that is not the strategy, but I think the American people get confused, and if we explain to them, look, boots on the ground means no combat forces, or boots on the ground means we are not going to do shock and awe or whatever, but we are going to have our people there, and there are certain things that they have to do, and without them, we can't be successful in this battle, and I think they can accept that, and they can—they are smart enough to figure it out, and if they think they are not hearing the truth, the whole truth, then I think they get, they kind of get their backs up.

I think it is also very important that the President give lots of updates. I think, you know, over the last several years the war in Afghanistan, there have been a lot of accomplishments that we have achieved over there, and I don't think the American people know, and I think only the President can tell them that, and I think they would like to know, as we move forward, how we are doing in Iraq, how we are doing in Syria, and I would strongly suggest that he go before the people—he is the only one that can do it—and keep them informed as to what is going on, because I think they are going to have to be in this, and this is not going to be—this is going to be for the entire duration of his Presidency and probably the next President's. So if we don't let people know what is going on and make them a part of it, we are not going to have the political support we need to go forward.

I am concerned about the strategy of counterterrorism. I don't think it has been overly effective in Yemen or other places that he pointed out that had actually been successful. I think we are going to have to be more aggressive than that.

I see what we are doing in Iraq is building up, pushing ISIL, I think the plan is to push them out of all their occupied territory, regain that, take it back, and free up Iraq, and then as you are pointing out, we don't want to have a safe haven where they can

just slip over into Syria. So my understanding of what the President is saying, he is not going to give them any safe haven. So while we don't know yet what more he will do, he has said he will make—take air strikes there if possible.

So I just, more than questions, I think I just want to relay a few of those things, my thoughts and feelings. I am not going to be in a position to do that much longer, so I want to take advantage of it while I have the opportunity. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Secretary HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, may I respond to a couple of the points you made because each is particularly important, and not only are your points right, I think, and I think the President agrees with what you have said, but most of the points are center-pieces and pillars of his strategy.

On the particular question on boots on the ground, what he has said is that there is no ground combat role for Americans. Yes, a combat role on the ground is going to be required. Obviously, it is going on in Iraq today. It will be required in Syria. And what he has said is the Iraqi security forces, the Peshmerga, the Kurdish forces that are the ground forces in Iraq, and we will continue to support them through air strikes and other capabilities we have.

Syria, as you know, the whole point of train and equip is to help develop that ground force, a capable unit-by-unit ground force in Syria, but he is fully aware of and agrees that this isn't going to be done without ground forces, but what he has made clear to the American people, and I know there are differences of opinion, as he does, that he is not going to order American combat ground forces into those areas, but I thought that was a point that you made that you gave me an opportunity of maybe hopefully clear that up.

Your point about informing and updating the American people, you are right. I think any of us in this business understand how critical that is the American people understand what is going on. They are represented obviously in this body and the body across the way, as it should be, but to have the American people understand it and be part of it, and especially the Congress, as I have noted in my testimony, the President thinks it is a critical component of going forward. So thank you for allowing me to maybe clear that up.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Yeah, on the boots on the ground point, I think the problem is that the President and many people have the instinct that the country, as we witness from the protesters, you know, we just don't want to go back into another war, and everyone is very concerned about that, and the President is seeking to reassure those folks, but I agree with the Chairman, I think it would be better to sort of explain, you know, what, it is not a boots-on-the-ground issue, and also it is not even a matter of, you know, we are war weary, so we are not going to send in troops just because we know it will upset people.

It is because we don't think it will work, and I think that is the thing to make clear is that there is too much of an excessive reliance on U.S. military force, then oddly, we push more people into the arms of ISIS [Islamic State in Iraq and Syria], and I think, you know, too often the President does sound more like he is in the

former camp of we don't want to do this because we know it is hard and we know you don't like it. It would be better if he would make it clear that we are not going to do this because it is not going to work, it is not the most effective way to confront those forces.

So both Buck and I will task you with going to the President and working on his messaging, but it is important and it is important how it is presented to the American people and how we build support for this program.

On the issue of finding, you know, Sunni partners because I still contend that is the key, if we find enough Sunnis in Iraq and Syria who are willing to fight against ISIS, that is when we will start to be successful. What are our efforts in terms of outreach to some of those tribes, focusing on Iraq for the moment, from the Anbar Awakening? They are still there. I suspect many of them are fighting with ISIS. How are we doing working with the Iraqi Government and the locals there to try to turn some of those tribesmen the same way we did during the Awakening?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, as you have just pointed out, and as I noted in my testimony, the reaching out to the Sunni tribes through an inclusive representative functioning government in Iraq is a start. General Allen's relationships will help, General Austin's relationships, relationships of other coalition partners in the area, especially Arab Sunni countries that are part of the coalition will be critically important to this. This cannot be seen as a U.S.-Western effort against any component of the Muslim world or Islam, Sunni versus Shi'a.

So it is all of those working together as we go forward in this coalition to get once again the Sunni tribe leadership and buy-in, and as I noted in my testimony that what we are doing, one of the most fundamental parts of that is the evolution and development of government in Iraq that the Sunnis trust and have some confidence in that begins to unite that country, and as you defined it in your opening statements, much of the Maliki government did everything but that the last 5 years and brought a lot of this on. So that can be done. It is a critical component of this. We know that, and we are working hard to do it.

Mr. SMITH. And just a little pie in the sky for the moment. The whole area there would benefit from the Sunnis and the Shi'a finding some way to coexist. Massive understatement, I understand. But our partners Saudi Arabia, the UAE [United Arab Emirates], Qatar, is there any way to have conversations with them and say, look, we know you guys hate Iran and understand that. A big part about what motivated Saudi Arabians and these other countries in the early stages of Syria's civil war to just say, hey, if you are against Assad, we are going to throw money at you, we are going to throw guns at you, which is what really empowered some of these violent extremists was the Saudis, they didn't care, they were like, we—we hate Iran, Assad is a partner, so whatever, whatever we have to do to get Assad is in our interests.

Do you think it is sort of dawning on them at this point that they are caught between two things here and if they don't find some way to peacefully—I mean, Iran's not going anywhere, okay? Now, we do wish that they would stop messing in external affairs as well as they do, but has there been any effort at saying how do we sort

of take the edge off that because that is what, you know, groups like ISIS feed on.

Secretary HAGEL. You have just identified a big part of the complications. Yes, we are much aware of that. We are working with that. As I noted, Secretary Kerry was in Jeddah last week and convened a meeting of the foreign ministers from the six GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries as well as four other Middle Eastern countries.

As I noted in my testimony and my comments, this is a complicated dynamic on a good day, and there are many factions and factors that are flowing through this, and we have to be mindful of that as we proceed and try to calibrate achieving an objective here that the President has laid out that is clearly in our interests, and clearly in the interests of those Sunni countries, Arab countries, all the countries of the Middle East, and to find that common ground and common interest and seize upon that where we can find that cooperation, and we are doing that, and that is coming together, as these countries are stepping forward on committing to what they are going to be doing, and they are going to be doing more of it as we coordinate that. So what you have identified, Congressman, is a core piece of this effort.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I am going to yield my time to the gentlelady from Indiana, Ms. Walorski.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the gentleman for yielding his time. Thank you, Secretary Hagel and General for being here, for your service, we appreciate it. And I am thinking that I remember on September 11th, a reporter was asking a question to White House press secretary and said how are you defining victory, and the White House press secretary said, I don't have my Webster's dictionary with me up here. And what is on the minds of the American people, I know, it is on my mind as well, that we have talked about degrading and destroying, and now those seem to be the two coins that we are understanding, we are degrading, which my understanding is we are slowing down this process, we are disrupting ISIL's maneuvers and operations, and then we are ultimately destroying, and I think it is a fair question to ask on behalf of all Americans that if this plan is successful, and there is so many doubts about this plan being successful, the big "if." What is the end game? What does it look like with a destroyed ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. First, destroying ISIL, which is clearly, as you have noted and we have said clearly, is not an easy or simple or quick task, and we have been very honest about that. We will continue to be honest about it. But your question, what is the end state, it is a region and it is a reality and a threat that is eliminated from threats against the United States and against our allies.

Mrs. WALORSKI. So—

Secretary HAGEL. That threat of beheadings, of terrorist, sophisticated terrorist attacks of slaughtering people, of a barbaric approach to everything they do, an ideology that has nothing to do with religion, any religion. The capacity that ISIL now possesses

through their funding mechanisms, through their sophistication, through their organization, through their strategy is a threat to everybody, so what does an end game look like is a world without that threat. Now, is the world always going to be dangerous? I suspect in our lifetimes it will be, but that is something that we are aware of, but we are dealing with the threat right now.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Right, I understand that, and I understand the enormity of it and the complexity of it, and I think the American people do as well, but I think it is a fair question to say, is, you know, is success that we stop seeing beheadings? You mentioned that. Of course that would be a measure of success. Is success that Iraq gets its territory back? That would be successful; I would imagine you would agree. That Syria—

Secretary HAGEL. Stability in the Middle East.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Stability in the Middle East.

Secretary HAGEL. Partners.

Mrs. WALORSKI. What about the caliphate in general, is success also going to be measured in the fact that we no longer have a group of people that literally are going to insist on world dominance in a caliphate or are we ever going to be able to deal with that, because it seems to me that if we don't continue to have some kind of a bold and aggressive approach, that there is some kind of democracy and freedom in that region with the very limited partners that we have that there will never be an end game, and my fear, and I think the fear of the American people is we have all heard this before. We have all lived through this already.

Secretary HAGEL. So what's the alternative, do nothing?

Mrs. WALORSKI. What does it look like? If this plan doesn't work, what is the alternative? What does it look like in the Middle East then?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, we always have Plan Bs and Cs, that is what the military does as well as anybody in the world, but we believe this plan will work, and we believe the way it is laid out with our partners, the structuring of it, the reality of it, the timeframes of it, the partnerships, commitments to this will work. But back to your more fundamental question, and I understand your question. As I said, I don't know if we will ever see a world without threats, particularly your question about won't there always be threats out there with some extremist group wanting to build an extremist caliphate in the Middle East? I suppose. But I have got to worry about what I have right in front of me right now, and this is an immediate threat. Yes, we have to think long term, we do. We are trying to think through that as to what will work, what will be effective, how do we bring the civilized world together to stop this—

Mrs. WALORSKI. Right.

Secretary HAGEL [continuing]. Because the other way to ask that question, Congresswoman, is what if we don't.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Correct. And just quickly, what else can we do as a Congress to make sure we get those passports away from the foreign fighters that are coming from America?

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you, and I am glad you mentioned that because it is something I noted in my testimony. It is a critical piece to this. It is a dangerous and real threat with those kind of

individuals floating around out there, possessing those passports with easy access, as I said, we are coordinating with using every interagency force we have, coordinating with our partners all over the world and databases, everything that we can do right now to address this, to identify those threats out there, to stop those threats.

Some countries are further ahead, like the U.K. [United Kingdom], probably further ahead than almost anyone, but I just was in a National Security Council meeting late yesterday afternoon when we came back from Tampa, the President chaired, and the Attorney General was there, the Secretary of Homeland Security there. We were all there. This was a big part of the topic. In fact, it was the central part of the topic, foreign fighters, and the President wanted updates, and he gets them every week on what are we doing, how much are we doing, how much can we still do and what do we have to do, so it is a big part of what we are doing here.

Mrs. WALORSKI. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen. So yesterday we took a vote. The vote was on whether to arm the Syrian rebels. We, I think, all acknowledge that ISIS is a problem and something that we need to take care of. I find it pretty disturbing that we are having this hearing after we have taken a vote because I don't think that the plan that I have seen was detailed enough to make me believe that your plan will work.

I am going to ask you some questions, most of which will probably have to go on the record or you will have to come in and brief me, and I hope the other members of this committee believe that it is important enough for us to understand exactly what this plan is because I am not so sure of it and I haven't heard the details as I would like to hear them.

I want to begin by saying that I have a Syrian-American community, and they are all over the place on this. I go and I talk to them, et cetera. Syrian moderates, most of my people say that those Syrian moderates have gone over to ISIS. And most of them have told me that they don't think that the Syrian moderates we arm, whoever those may be, are actually going to fight against the ISIS moderates who used to hang out with the Syrian moderates.

Equip and train, because we did such a great job in Iraq, \$35 billion later—and Mr. Chairman, I was the one every single time Rumsfeld and others were in front of us asking about equip and train. But some have said, as my good friend and colleague here, that it wasn't a problem of equip and train; it was a lack of leadership; it was bad people commanding; it was the commander in chief Maliki who was wrong and didn't help us on this or didn't make this thing work.

Can you tell me who the commander in chief of the Syrian moderates, who are all over the place—don't even talk to each other sometimes—how we are going to see that leadership go through? These are just for the record, okay. What type of arms? Exactly what type of arms are we going to hand over to these people? Be-

cause the last time I checked, we handed over arms to Maliki and they ended up in ISIS and the very same arms are going after us.

Coalition. Coalition of 40, the President says. Who? What will they really do? How many troops? I have been through this, you guys. I saw the coalition in Iraq, and we used to sort of like chuckle at each other in seeing some of these countries with one person. I don't know, training dogs, maybe a bomb expert, but coalition of 40? Who? What? How much? Which are the combat troops? How are they going to get there? I would like to know those things.

And I have a problem, when you go out in front of the American people and start talking about why certain countries might not want to suggest that they are with us—this is why I want all this information somehow. I don't need to put it out in the public. But you know what I am told by my Turkish Americans? That Turkish Army arms are in ISIS hands, and the Government of Turkey has winked to let those go into those hands. I have a problem. It is a very complicated issue you are getting America into and an even more complicated situation.

More importantly—and, Secretary, this isn't and shouldn't be under your sort of purview, but it is under the administration's—so let's say—and I hope your plan works, because, you know, ISIS, ISIL, they are not good. I hope I am wrong. I hoped the same thing when I voted against the Iraq war, that I was wrong, but I don't believe that I was wrong on that. So I want to see the plan; in particular, I want to ask the administration for this, the neighborhood players, let's say we eliminate ISIS and ISIL, what fills that gap? What has to fill that gap for this to work are people putting up homes, people putting up schools, people putting up jobs, people getting these people the type of lives that they see on television and all these TV shows we export but aren't living. And that is one of the reasons this has been created.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Gentlelady yields back.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary, in November 2005, as a Senator, you penned an article in Foreign Affairs magazine asserting that Vietnam was a national tragedy, partly because Members of Congress failed their country, remained silent, and lacked the courage to challenge the administration in power until it was too late. You wrote, and I quote, "To question your government is not unpatriotic; to not question your government is unpatriotic. America owes its men and women in uniform a policy worthy to their sacrifice." These are your words, Mr. Secretary.

In the past, you informed America that many in the Middle East see us as an obstacle of peace and an aggressor, an occupier. You wrote that our policies are a source of significant friction in the region, and that we are, at the same time, both a stabilizing and destabilizing force in the Middle East. Also, you described a fear of the uncontrollable, the unpredictable consequences of military action. You stated, "How many of us really know and understand Iraq, the country, the history, the people and the role of the Arab world?" You asserted that the American people must be told of that long-term commitment, risk, and cost of the undertaking.

Mr. Secretary, you and I have a friendship that was based on my coming out against the Iraq war. I did not know you prior to that, and I was very grateful that you extended a hand to me because I was getting beat up pretty bad down in my district and by some of my Republican colleagues. In fact, the chairman at the time told me that he would not appoint me to be a subcommittee chairman because I would vote with the Democrats to pull our troops out of Iraq, which he was right in that assessment—not necessarily not naming me as a subcommittee chairman but my position.

The reason I bring this up in when you said back in 2005 is that in the year 2000, when Bill Clinton left the Presidency, President Clinton left this country as President, we were \$5.6 trillion in debt. Today, Mr. Secretary, the debt of this Nation is over \$17.6 trillion. I have heard you testify—and you will in 2015—that cuts are coming to the military. You are concerned about it, and we are concerned about it. You also have said that sequestration, if it is not repealed, is going to complicate the cuts that are coming without—normally.

I want to ask you today, do you think that Congress should pay for whatever we decide to do and the administration decides to do as it relates to Syria and to Iraq? Do you think we need to pay for it today or put it on the back of our grandchildren? Because we will not be able to continue to police the world, and by using what we have is known as borrowing money from the Chinese, the Japanese, and all these other countries, because we cannot pay our bills today, would you agree that we need to pay for whatever we do in Syria and in Iraq, we need to pay for it today and not tomorrow?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you. And I recognize any time any of us ever write anything or say anything, it is always at some peril. But let me address my own words for a moment and say that I, obviously, agreed with what I wrote then and I still agree with it.

Now, there is a big difference between what we are talking about today versus where we were in 2005. The President's strategy in where and how and why it was to go forward—

Mr. JONES. Mr. Secretary, one moment. I apologize to you for that. But please answer my question about do we pay for it today or do we pay for it tomorrow, because my time is going to expire.

Secretary HAGEL. The responsibility of elected officials is always to be honest about anything they get this country into, any action they take, including paying for it. And I can assure you, this Secretary of Defense will be very clear in this administration on what we believe it is going to cost, how we are going to pay for it. And there will not be any ambiguity about that. But, yes, every Congress, every elected official has that responsibility, that financial responsibility and fiduciary responsibility.

Mr. JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I think, generally, history would show that the West won the Cold War. It would also show winning the Cold War didn't either end communism or get rid of communists. So the point I want to make is, is it fair to say that we might be able to beat

ISIL as a group, but that is not going to end extreme Islamic militants or going to end the desire for those folks to try to create a caliphate sometime in the future?

Secretary HAGEL. I can't, nor would I, and I don't believe the President would, ever say that what we are doing now and attempting to do with our strategy and our focus on ISIL will end forever any terrorist group or any group of people who want to do harm to our country or establish Islamic caliphate. Of course, not. I can't guarantee that.

Mr. LARSEN. That is great. That is what I want to hear, because I think we need to have the right expectation here. When people ask you what the definition of winning is, it is a great question. We just need to have the right expectation about what that is.

Secretary HAGEL. But I think also, Congressman, the reality of the threat, as it is today, is very real and—

Mr. LARSEN. Yeah.

Secretary HAGEL [continuing]. I will never come before this committee overstate a threat or understate a threat. And we have a threat.

Mr. LARSEN. Second, in your testimony on page 3, you say, "CENTCOM's plan includes targeted actions against ISIL's safe havens in Syria. General Dempsey and I"—meaning you—"have both approved the CENTCOM plan."

So you have approved a CENTCOM plan already that includes air strikes inside Syria?

Secretary HAGEL. That plan was provided to the President in full explanation yesterday with all the options, all the plans. And I laid it out, generally, in my testimony, and the President asked that, as to what our options are.

Mr. LARSEN. In your testimony, you say you have approved that plan. It was briefed to the President. Has the President approved that plan or taken any action to operationalize that plan?

Secretary HAGEL. The President has not yet approved its finality, but he will do that when he feels that he is—

Mr. LARSEN. I am sure he is putting a lot of thought into it. I am not saying he is not. I just want to be sure at what step the White House is with that.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

Mr. LARSEN. Thanks.

The third question, mainly for the general—I don't want you to feel left out—on the train-and-equip mission, I think Mr. Smith made a good point, it is how we get out of the fight. We want to train and equip moderate Syrian opposition. Obviously, after 13 years in Afghanistan and Iran, we should have learned some lessons about the vetting. And I think a big concern is how do we know people are moderate; people are Syrian, that is, are committed to a free Syria; and third, that they are in the opposition, they are not going to turn on us?

General MAYVILLE. Yes, Congressman. You raise a good point. I think we have got to be very upfront that the vetting process is absolutely essential if we want to get this right. We have a tremendous amount of experience over the last decade in vetting and standing up these types of forces. We have an eye on the pool right now of folks that we can draw from, but we need to be very delib-

erate. Despite our best efforts, this will not be perfect, but we are looking for individuals that can come together that want to defend their community, can work as a team.

They have to be able and willing. They have to be appropriate for the task. Many of them will be former military. Some will come from the large Syrian diaspora that's already been displaced, but many of them are fighting right now against the Assad government. We will have to put in place mechanisms to assure ourselves of their reliability and make sure that we have a system of accountability, and then we will build from there. We will build a chain of command. We will take small groups and create clusters and build formations. It will be something that is a multiyear requirement that we will have to look at.

Mr. LARSEN. I think that we will, as it was laid out in the amendment we had yesterday, we will have plenty of time to talk to you all later on how that is going and what you are running into.

Finally, I don't have a lot of time so I will just make a note on this, I was surprised to hear the President use the 2001 AUMF [Authorization for Use of Military Force] as a justification for this, because the last time Pentagon, as I recall, was in front of us to discuss this issue at all, there was at that time I wouldn't say 100 percent opposition but a lot of reluctance in using the 2001 AUMF because there was no connection. So, at some point in the future, I would like to find out what changed. But time is up, and I do want to have that explored at some point.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing.

Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for giving us your time today to help walk through this strategy. I would like to get your thoughts on two areas. You know, strategy has a lot of components, as you mentioned. When you look at a lot of these terrorist groups, the oxygen that tends to feed them is twofold: One is hatred, which we can't always do a lot about, but the second one is their financing and their money.

When I look at ISIL, at least the figures that I have, that we expect them to get about \$1 billion this year through kidnapping for ransom, selling oil in the black market, stealing money from banks and funding from state sympathizers from the Gulf. Could you give us your thoughts on the strategy we are going to use to cut that off, one? And secondly, could you give me your thoughts—you know, General Dempsey about a year ago told us that Syria had five times more air defenses, some of which are high-end systems that is to say higher altitude, longer range—could you give us your concerns, if any, about the impact those air defense systems could have on some of our air strikes and our capability of that?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you. On the ISIL financing, and you stated it correctly, we must cut off that funding and those sources, and it is as high a priority in this effort as any one priority.

As I mentioned in my testimony just generally, the Treasury Department, through a couple of their offices set up to deal with for-

eign financing and these general kinds of threats, have set up a special office on this particular issue working with our international partners. You hit some of the main ones, the black market avenue that they use to sell oil. They have, as you I know are aware, ISIL has taken control of certain small oil fields in Syria, and we have some estimates of 100,000 barrels of oil that those fields are producing, and they get them out in different ways, so to cut off that main source.

You mentioned other sources. They, obviously, have taken over cities and towns and resources and banks. But there are day-to-day illegal activities that they are involved in, businesses that we are trying to find, will find, but that has to be working with our partners on it. So there is no higher priority than getting that— to cut that off.

On your question on Syrian air defenses, I would feel a lot more comfortable, Congressman, and we can do this in a private—in a closed setting, and we would be very happy to come in and give you a thorough briefing on this.

Mr. FORBES. And Mr. Secretary, thank you. And the other thing I would just ask, at some point in time if you could do for us, I know we have a priority of cutting off that funding, but I think, on the committee, we would love to just hear what our strategy is for actually doing, you know, doing that. Because—

Secretary HAGEL. Okay.

Mr. FORBES [continuing]. We would like to know, if they are getting \$1 billion a year, do we want to get them down to \$200 million? I mean, what have we laid out as our strategy, and what exactly is our plan to get our hands around that and do that? So if at some point in time you could maybe share that with us in whatever venue or setting you think is appropriate, we would appreciate that.

Secretary HAGEL. We can do that whenever you want to do that, and we could do that—I think it'd be more effective in a closed briefing on exactly how we are doing it and take you down into some depth on this. And we can coordinate with your staff on this.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Secretary, thank you so much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I am glad you brought that up. I think that is one thing that really separates ISIL from all the other terrorist groups is they are so well funded and they have good leadership and know how to use that money. So it would be very good to attack that.

Secretary HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, we can do it through your committee however way you want to do it.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we just found out there is no votes tomorrow, so probably people will be heading to the airport pretty quick, so we will get back to you. Thank you.

Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Hagel, your predecessor one-time removed, Secretary Gates, as he was leaving, gave a speech at West Point where he said, "In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the President to again send a big American land Army into Asia or into

the Middle East or Africa should have his head examined, as General McArthur so delicately put it.”

Yesterday, during the debate on the chairman’s amendment, I mean, obviously, there was, you know, high anxiety that, you know, this amendment was really sort of a prelude to the scenario that Secretary Gates warned against. One of the reasons why I voted for the amendment was that I think a close examination of the text showed that, in fact, we were talking about using a program, title 10, which is not about sending in large ground forces from the U.S. but, in fact, almost doing the opposite, which is to sort of stand up indigenous forces to take the fight, you know, to our enemy.

And I guess I just want to ask you, as long as I’ve got you here, is just, you know, if you could just sort of reiterate whether or not that is the correct interpretation of the McKeon Amendment, or do you need to have your head examined?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, having my head examined, that question is open for many reasons, not just this issue, I suspect.

But I completely agree with Secretary Gates. And I would not make that recommendation unless it would be such a catastrophic situation that—but I don’t think that is the case today. I know it is not the case today.

Now, that said, I think the issue overall, though, is always one of, first, identifying the threat, is it real? And then, what do you do about it? And your question about the interpretation of the amendment is, for example, I mention in my testimony, when we put all of the additional soldiers in place that the President has ordered, that will be approximately around 1,600 Americans in Iraq. The interpretation, as I have read the amendment in the CR [continuing resolution], is—I think your interpretation is correct.

I said this has to be a partnership—the President has said that—between the Congress and the administration. I was once on your side of the dais. I understand Article I pretty well, the responsibilities of Congress, starting with the fact you have the money and the authorities and all that goes with your side of the equation. So there are specific issues that we will work through on how we implement that amendment and those authorities.

There is always a question of, I think, if we could rewrite it, we would probably rewrite it in certain areas. But, overall, I think what you have laid out your understanding of what you voted for is pretty clear, in my understanding.

Mr. COURTNEY. All right. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

And in fact, I think one of the benefits of the amendment is that it really does engage the Congress with the administration as opposed to just kind of abdicating our role, which, you know, some of the comments on the floor were just, well, let the AUMF from 2001 and 2002 kind of control or authorize whatever actions the administration needs to take, which, again, I really think is not the way that our checks and balances should operate.

Secretary HAGEL. No. Well, I agree. But the difference, AUMF, 2001 or 2002, on this particular issue, the train and equip moderate opposition for Syria is, this is equipping and training a non-governmental group that we have—I am not sure recently or when

historically we have done that—I suppose we have, but legally, I mean, above board.

Mr. COURTNEY. Right.

Secretary HAGEL. And that was different in Iraq. That was different in some of these other situations. So—but the authority the President has statutorily—and I know there are differences of opinion on this, using that AUMF from 2001, 2002—really it comes down to the connection ISIL has had with Al Qaeda and still has in terrorist groups. But the training and equipping mission with nongovernmental groups is a little different.

Mr. COURTNEY. Right. And, again, I think that is our role now. I mean, it is by statute that we will get those reports from your Department and we are going to have a timeline where we are going to be reengaged almost immediately after the election.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary and General, for being here today.

Over the weekend, the President promised that, as we defeat ISIL, there will be no more mistakes. I look forward to working with you to avoid his mistakes.

The Obama mistake of underestimating ISIL as junior varsity, JV. We know that 16 months ago, as the President was underestimating the terrorist threat and saying it was diminished, that that was not true. Dr. Fred Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute released a map showing in warning of the growing terrorist threat across North Africa, Middle East, and Central Asia, and this was ignored by this administration.

The Obama mistake of failing to secure a basic security agreement with Iraq, undermining the achievements of the American and allied service members who promoted freedom in Iraq—and I particularly appreciate that I had two sons serve in Iraq and working with the people of Iraq to preserve their freedom.

The Obama mistake of defense sequestration, downsizing our military as jihadists expand their safe havens across the world to attack the American families.

The Obama mistake of failing to support the students of Iran's Green Revolution. We should remember the Iranian revolution supporters in Tehran carried signs in English declaring clearly their goals: Death to Israel; death to America.

The Obama mistake of declaring a red line in Syria on chemical weapons and then blaming others. Clearly, the red line was stated by him in a speech on August 20, 2012, and a year later he denied it, which is not correct.

The Obama mistake of releasing five murderous Taliban while negotiating with the terrorists. One of the terrorists was praised by the Taliban murderers as the equivalent of 10,000 warriors to destroy America. It is more important than ever that the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay be retained to protect American families.

The Obama mistake of announcing an Afghan withdrawal date, disregarding conditions, putting Afghanistan and Pakistan at risk.

The Obama mistake of equating Hamas rocket attacks with Israel's self-defense. We should recognize the Hamas creed, quote, "We value death more than you value life," end of quote.

The Obama mistake of the Benghazi assassinations cover-up.

The Obama mistake of the Fort Hood massacre dismissed as workplace violence and the Little Rock murder as drive-by shooting.

The President obviously needs to change course and adopt peace through strength. We know weakness endangers American families worldwide. I believe the President should take action remembering September 11 and the global war on terrorism. And a way to change course is backing up the Kurdish regional government, our courageous allies.

And I would like to know, what are the plans for weaponry for Erbil? I understand there is a problem in delivering the weapons. We need to be there to back up people who have been so bravely associated with United States.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, on your question regarding backing up Erbil, the Peshmerga, there is no country that we have accelerated our deliveries to quicker than Iraq, specifically the Peshmerga. We have had allied countries flying missions in there directly to Erbil to reinforce them with ammunition, with equipment coming from many nations. It has been as high a priority over many months as we have had. So it has been ongoing, and it is as high priority as we have with our partners.

Mr. WILSON. And as the co-chairman of the Kurdish Regional Caucus, I appreciate that. And I have been to the Kurdish region. For decades, they have resisted oppression and identified with freedom of the United States.

A final question from me, Mr. Secretary, is just yes or no, is America at war?

Secretary HAGEL. I said America was at war against ISIL, just like we are Al Qaeda. I said it in my testimony.

Mr. WILSON. And we are at war on a global war on terrorism?

Secretary HAGEL. Yes. Terrorists who try to kill us. The President is taking action and has laid that action out very clearly and has asked for the Congress' partnership.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you. And actions are so important. Thank you very much.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Tsongas.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome, Secretary Hagel and General Mayville.

Like all Americans, and I think, as you have heard in our discussion today, obviously everyone on this committee and if you could have been on the floor throughout the past several days, I am greatly concerned with the recent events in Iraq and Syria. We know that ISIL is a lethal terrorist organization, and we must confront the difficult questions that our President has raised about the serious threat that it poses.

But this is a complex and long-term challenge, and as such, I am wary of commitments that the President has admitted will spill into future administrations, creating enduring costs while raising

substantial and unpredictable risks without a more robust, clear-headed debate. And I, like Congresswoman Sanchez, would have appreciated the opportunity to have this hearing with you before we took the vote.

And I appreciate the President's continued commitment not to send U.S. ground forces into combat, but his experience has shown any expansion of U.S. involvement in this region raises serious concerns over this slippery slope we may find ourselves on. Chairman Dempsey's recent testimony that he could foresee a scenario in which he could recommend U.S. ground troops in the future crystalizes the alarming uncertainties around this effort.

Many questions remain. You have heard some of them addressed today, including the cost, the timetable, the nature of the participation from the region's Arab states, to name just a few. Yesterday's train-and-equip vote, endorsing just one piece of the strategy, focused on expanding our effort in Syria, masked the multifaceted challenges ahead, and I could not endorse it.

But I appreciate the opportunity today to begin to ask some of these questions. In his September 16 testimony before the Senate, Chairman Dempsey noted that the United States and its allies would work to develop a military chain of command in Syria that is linked to a political structure. I would like to know more about the political structure that Chairman Dempsey is envisioning.

Secretary Hagel, do you think that the Syrian opposition has a solid and widely supported political structure on which to base a military command? And, if not, who do you think it will be linked to?

Secretary HAGEL. First, on the issue of a political agreement and a political resolution, I mentioned that in my testimony, the President has been very clear on that point when he has said, on many occasions, and I have just noted, that there is not a military solution to this in Syria or in Iraq or the Middle East. So a political resolution must be achieved. Now—

Ms. TSONGAS. Reclaiming my time. But that is not the question. We are now embarking upon an effort to train and equip the Syrian forces—the moderate Syrian forces that we think we can work with. And for it to be effective—and I believe he is correct—that it has to be tied to a political structure. So to start down this path in which we are focusing on training, equipping a force that is not aligned with any Syrian-oriented political structure, really in some ways puts the cart before the horse.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, not exactly. If, in fact, there is no alternative that is allowed to develop in Syria because of the brutality of ISIL and other terrorist groups that are slaughtering the people in Syria, and you have a regime that has no legitimacy to govern, which started all this, you have got to start somewhere. And we recognize this is difficult. We recognize there is no good option here.

But if we don't help where we can help develop some infrastructure—and this is why we would train in units, not individuals—to allow a political opposition to come together based on security—because security is required in this, as well. It isn't either-or. That is how we envision and that is how we would want to go forward.

That is partly why this is a long-term effort. This is why we have been very clear it is complicated. It is serious.

But if there is no opening, no opportunity for a political opposition group to develop because they are all out of the country—

Ms. TSONGAS. But you would agree it, obviously, doesn't exist today.

Secretary HAGEL. There is very little organizational opposition in Syria today, that is right.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you.

Secretary HAGEL. And that is part of the problem.

Ms. TSONGAS. Thank you. My time is up.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

This morning I saw a brief news story that said that decisions for approving targets for air strikes in Syria would be made by the President and only by the President. Is that true?

Secretary HAGEL. No, it is not true. That story in the Wall Street Journal was not true.

Mr. KLINE. I can't tell you how relieved I am to hear that. That is a terrible mistake if we are going to start making daily tactical decisions in the White House. So I am very relieved to hear that. But that leaves—

Secretary HAGEL. I might just say, I was sitting next to the President yesterday when this entire issue was being discussed, and he was very clear with General Austin, once he makes decisions, he gives General Austin and our military leaders the authority to carry out those policies.

Mr. KLINE. Outstanding. As I said, I am very, very relieved to hear that.

That does lead me to the larger question, though. You know, I have got 3 or 4 minutes here, but could one of you sort of outline what the command structure, what the command and control structure is going to be? What is the role of General Austin and CENTCOM? What is the role of Iraqi commanders, of Peshmerga? Who is going to make the decisions?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, because the general is just a pretty face here and hasn't had to answer a question, really, except one.

Mr. KLINE. Actually, I was so hoping he would answer.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, you have never been indirect before, Congressman.

So, with your permission, I will ask General Mayville.

Mr. KLINE. Very good.

General MAYVILLE. The command-and-control structure begins with the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi security forces. Our role there is to supplement that with what they need so that they can make informed decisions. We are doing that right now. Now we are going to switch out some of the initial assessment teams and replace them with more—with Army advisers that can better help at the general officer level, as well as reach into the ministries and assist, as well. But the chain of command is an Iraqi chain of command, enabled by partners in the region.

Mr. KLINE. Okay. Pretty face or not, let me try it this way: I started my questioning by asking about targets for air strikes in Syria. So if it is not the President of the United States, who is it?

General MAYVILLE. Now, for targeting, targeting will be planned jointly and enabled by U.S. Central Command through its CAOC [Combined Air Operations Center], which is in the region. The mechanisms to command and control those, they are already in place. We did that, you saw that unfurl when we retook Mosul Dam. You saw that when we assisted in the operations around Haditha and Amerli. So we are not going to change that. The CAOC, which is an Air Force command and control structure component underneath Central Command, will orchestrate all of this. The coordination and the planning, it will be done forward in concert with Iraqi forces and Iraqi leaders.

Mr. KLINE. Air strikes in Syria, I am talking about.

General MAYVILLE. We haven't received authorization. That is part of what the Secretary was talking about. We have yet to receive authorization for those missions. But—

Mr. KLINE. So it is not the President of the United States, but we are not really quite sure who it is to make those decisions?

General MAYVILLE. If I could, sir, whether we strike in—where we strike ISIL, regardless of its geography, the command-and-control structure that I just laid out is the command-and-control structure that we will use wherever the President allows us to strike.

Mr. KLINE. All right.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Hanabusa.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and General, for being here. I think part of the problem, and you heard it with the questionings that we are having today, is that because the amendment that we voted on involved Syria and the potential to train and to arm the Syrian, quote, whatever that moderate force will be that is going to be vetted 15 days from now or when the Senate passes it, and the fact that the 170 air strikes are really in Iraq, and we are talking about our 1,600, as far as I know, are in Iraq, that the public, I think, are getting confused, as we probably are, as to what exactly is being done in Iraq versus what we are authorizing.

You also know that part of the continuing resolution was to fund OCO [Overseas Contingency Operations] at the 2014 level, which technically is about \$30-some-odd billion dollars more than what was requested in 2015. And whether or how you determine what that money is and how it plays out for the remainder of the continuing resolution is something else, but we also know that it was the request early on that the OCO funding include the \$500 million, which is to arm and train 5,000 Syrians.

So having said that—whoever can answer this question, take it—my question is really, when we divide the two, not Syria part but the Iraq part, which we are clearly engaged in, one, where is the funding coming from? Is it OCO funding? Two, how much is that costing us per day? And, though we feel that we don't have the same kind of legislation as we have in the amendment, which clearly defined who would be appropriate vetted people in Syria,

now who are the people that we are vetting, if we are vetting them at all, in Iraq?

Because right now, air strikes are in Iraq, and we need the ground forces, as I understand the philosophy, to be in Iraq. So who are we vetting? Because General Dempsey, I think, made a statement yesterday that there are 50 brigades or so in Iraq of which 26 or 24, 1 of those 2 numbers, are not appropriate because it is not of the right composition.

So who is making these vetting decisions, and what are we in for in the Iraq portion of this? Though we have sort of been kind of thrown off the path, because we are talking about Syria. But our people, 1,600 of them are in Iraq. I think my constituents want to know, what does this mean for Iraq? Iraq is the concern right now because that is where we are.

So whoever wants to take it.

Secretary HAGEL. I will give you an answer, and then the general may want to go deeper on this. But your question about who are we vetting, we would be vetting the Syrian opposition forces that we would begin to train and assist.

Ms. HANABUSA. But I am talking about Iraq.

Secretary HAGEL. But you asked the question about who are vetting? That is who we are vetting. It is not Iraq.

Ms. HANABUSA. So we are not vetting anyone in Iraq? Is that—

Secretary HAGEL. The Iraqi security forces under the government, the sovereign Government of Iraq and the Peshmerga, who, as you know, are part of the overall structure, are in place. They are institutionalized. They are functioning armies. Now, that is different from what we are doing.

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Secretary, not to interrupt you, but General Dempsey said, of the 50 brigades, only 24—

Secretary HAGEL. Those are in Iraq.

Ms. HANABUSA. No, that is what I am talking about. I am talking about Iraq. I said, we have sort of meshed this whole thing together, but I am looking at Iraq. So are we vetting the Iraqi forces that are supposed to be the ground troops—

Secretary HAGEL. No.

Ms. HANABUSA [continuing]. Or is it only Iraq that is going to provide—the general is nodding and you are saying no. So I would like—

General MAYVILLE. I am nodding because I understand the question. I can understand the confusion.

Secretary HAGEL. We are not vetting Iraqi forces and troops. What General Dempsey was talking about is the most capable Iraqi security forces, Iraqi security forces. Vetting in that part of it is part of the Syrian—train and equip moderate Syrian opposition.

General, do you want to add anything to that?

General MAYVILLE. Yes, Congresswoman, I understand the question. I can see how it can be confusing.

What we are doing today in Iraq is we are, first and foremost, securing U.S. Government facilities and U.S. Government personnel, American citizens in Iraq. We have two operating centers, one in Erbil and one in Baghdad, designed to facilitate the Iraqi security forces operations. We advise them. We make them aware of what they need to do next, and we help them track issues. And,

as was mentioned earlier, when they go on an operation and it needs to be enabled by air support, these operation centers do that as well.

Most recently, the assessment team that went into the Baghdad area, the area that General Dempsey spoke to and identified 50 brigades and gave an assessment, that assessment is over. And we are changing those forces out, and they will be advise-and-assist forces to work with selected brigades and divisions in Iraq. I hope that helps.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROGERS [presiding]. Gentlelady's time has expired.

The chair now recognizes himself for 5 minutes for questions.

And, Secretary Hagel, I first want to thank you for yesterday's Medal of Honor ceremony for Bennie Adkins. That was very special. I appreciate you doing that for a great American.

I understand that the administration was prepared to acknowledge publicly that the Russians were in violation of the INF [Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces] Treaty over a year ago but didn't for policy reasons. Do you know what thought went into why we didn't publicly acknowledge INF violations earlier?

Secretary HAGEL. I know that we were carefully examining the evidence that we had and that we were looking at to see if, in fact, they were in violation. But, as to your specific question, no, I don't know.

Mr. ROGERS. Okay. Yesterday—or recently, Russia's President announced at Yalta in mid-August that he had authorized the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons into Ukrainian territory. Do you know how the U.S. would respond and what the implications are for us if he, in fact, does move those weapons into Ukrainian territory?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, again, I think, rather than talking about this in an open hearing, we probably ought to do this in a closed hearing to take you through a number of steps there on this. And I think I would feel more comfortable to talk about it that way.

Mr. ROGERS. I understand.

And do you know why the United States is considering continuing to approve Russia's proposals to fly under the Open Skies Treaty enhanced sensors and aircraft over the United States while it is in material breach of the INF? I am really concerned about us going forward with that Open Skies access when we know that they are cheating on chemical weapons conventions, biological weapons conventions, and now we know they are cheating on the INF.

What are your thoughts on whether we should go forward with the Open Skies practice?

Secretary HAGEL. We, as you know, just had a team in Moscow last week on this specific issue. We were represented by a senior member, Defense Department, State Department led it, and others, and these were all issues that were discussed. We, the Russians and us, have many mutual interests on different things, and what they have done in Ukraine and their actions the last 6 months have not only complicated but put in jeopardy all of those interests that we have. So we are working our way through the very set of questions that you have just asked right now.

Mr. ROGERS. So, in fact, this may be one of the consequences they may suffer or experience as a result of the INF violations—

Secretary HAGEL. Well—

Mr. ROGERS [continuing]. Denied access under the Open Skies program?

Secretary HAGEL. No decision has been made on this, but we are looking at a lot of different options, and we are talking to the Russians.

Mr. ROGERS. Good.

My last question is, recently or yesterday, the committee received the second of two reprogramming requests to the total of \$1 billion out of the Army O&M [operations and maintenance] to pay for the military's efforts to respond to the Ebola outbreak. We already have a serious readiness problem. What are your thoughts about what this \$1 billion would do to that? I ask this to either one of you. Doesn't matter.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you. Two pieces to that. One is the money. And second is probably the bigger implication of your question, how does that affect, as you say, our readiness and our capability to respond to other challenges. And we have got a lot of them, as you know.

On the money, that can be done, okay, by using OCO that would not affect our readiness in any other area. But the other question that you ask is a legitimate question. Right now, General Dempsey and our commanders have agreed that what we will be providing the military in assisting in Africa with the specific areas that the President announced on using our unique capabilities would not affect our readiness anywhere in the world, because these are capabilities that we have that we wouldn't take away from any of the other areas that we are now dealing with that are significant threats.

Mr. ROGERS. So am I hearing that you said that OCO is really the proper source for the money? Would it be accurate to say that we can expect you to come to the conferees and ask us to adjust the OCO levels to reflect this added amount of money before we can finish up the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act]?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I have to talk to the comptroller about this and OMB [Office of Management and Budget] on the book-keeping on how that works. But, as you know, Congressman, and there are a lot of different opinions on whether there should be an overseas account or not and whether it is a slush fund or not, but in this case, I think—and it is an imperfect process—probably OCO is an appropriate account for this kind of thing, these things that develop, these contingencies, overseas contingencies situations. I don't think anybody would have forecast this, we didn't a year ago, the seriousness of this. So we are working it right now with comptrollers and the appropriations people here on the Hill.

Mr. ROGERS. Based on the way the world is looking, OCO may have to get a lot bigger to accommodate all of the contingencies that are popping up around the globe.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, it may. I hope not. But, as you know, we have been bringing that OCO account down every year, so that is the good news.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you very much. Thank you for your service.

Who is next?

Mr. Barber from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes for any questions he may have.

Mr. BARBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary and General Mayville, for your service, both in uniform, Mr. Secretary, and in public life as Senator and now as our Secretary of Defense.

You know, I was—took the vote yesterday after a lot of consideration about what we were doing when we were giving authorization to a limited authority to train and equip the vetted and moderate forces in Syria. I was proud to stand with my colleagues to give that to you and the President, because absolutely, we must stop the savagery that we know has been already committed at the hands of ISIL and, also, because I want to make sure that we do everything we can to prevent them from having a safe haven to send harm our way in the homeland. We must do everything we can to prevent another situation in which terrorists can attack this country from safe havens overseas.

So I have two questions, Mr. Secretary, one related to that and the other to the larger issue of how we really contain and hopefully eliminate and destroy ISIL. First, could you speak to the question about how you see ISIL's current capabilities for carrying out transnational terrorism? And, secondly, could you speak to how arming the Syrian opposition will roll back ISIL's territory and their ability to launch an attack? And how long would you estimate it will take for the opposition to really engage ISIL in order to degrade its capabilities?

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you, Congressman. The first question on transnational criminal activities as a source of ISIL funding, it is part of—and a significant part of—that funding, and I think in a couple of the questions that were asked here earlier, specifically the black marketing of oil—

Mr. BARBER. Secretary, I was really addressing what is your view about how we can prevent their capabilities for exporting terrorism into our country and to other countries.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, you have to cut off the capability and cut off the funding. And that is what I was talking about earlier in answers to some other questions, as well. And that is a huge priority of what we are overall in our overall strategy how you defeat ISIL, how you degrade them, you disconnect them and you defeat them. Taking that funding away is a big part of that, and we are operationally doing that right now with our partners through the Treasury Department, our law enforcement all over the world. And it is a key part of degrading any capacity they have in the future.

As to your longer-term question, how long, I think the President has been pretty clear on this. When General Dempsey and I were before the Senate committee 2 days ago, we talked about this. I can't give you an exact number of years how long, but we know it is going to take some time. We know it is going to take some years. Maybe we can do it sooner.

But this is, as you know so well and has been reflected this morning in many of the comments, this is a group that has capacity that we have never seen before outside of a nation state. And you mix in with that the religious dynamic, ethnic dynamic, all the

other factors that complicate this situation. It is going to take some time, and we know that.

Mr. BARBER. In your view, is ISIL capable today of sending radicalized Americans back to this country to do harm to the United States?

Secretary HAGEL. Oh, I think they are capable of doing that today.

Mr. BARBER. Given that, I want to expand the question of their threat in the Middle East to Israel, to Jordan, to Lebanon. Can you speak to us about what you see is already happening and further threats that might exist for those countries?

Secretary HAGEL. It is very clear to me, and I think most people who have looked at this, and certainly it is to the President and his administration, that with the instability that currently resides all across the Middle East, that you go right through each of the countries, starting on the west with Lebanon and you move east, every one of those countries is in some form of instability and under threat from ISIL, from other terrorists organizations.

If we see further destabilization of these countries, that will create a global problem that will ripple out everywhere. Oil, if you would destabilize the major oil-producing countries in the Middle East, that in itself would affect world economy. It would affect everything. Israel, I mean, you look at where we are today in that part of the world; it is probably as unstable as it has been in our lifetime.

Mr. BARBER. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP [presiding]. Gentleman's time is expired.

Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

Secretary HAGEL. Yes, sir.

Mr. LAMBORN. I did support the amendment yesterday of the chairman. However, that is only good through December 11 at the latest, so we will be revisiting this issue again soon. So, because we know ISIL is so dangerous, look what the news is out of Australia just today, going against the public, against Australians. So this is a bloodthirsty group, and the beheading of two Americans is a horrible situation and was one of the real reasons why I supported the President's plan.

However, I would like to have you elaborate on some of the details of the President's plan. Other questions have done this previously, but particularly, are we contemplating—will we be using UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] and drones, armed Predators and Reapers to take out ISIL leadership like we have done in Iraq and Afghanistan, like we are doing now currently in Somalia and Yemen?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, the way I would answer your question is, and I think the President noted this in his statement to the American people a week ago, that we are looking at every option, every target using our capabilities and our partners to degrade and destroy ISIL.

Mr. LAMBORN. So that is something that is on the table?

Secretary HAGEL. Everything is being closely examined. Everything.

Mr. LAMBORN. Because I would certainly hope the President would not take that off the table.

Secretary HAGEL. Everything is on the table.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Good. And regardless of whether it is Syria, Iraq or any other neighboring country, this leadership needs to be—and the American people would support eliminating the leadership.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, as you also recall from the President's speech, he said wherever they are.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Second issue is the use of our Tier One special forces, our elite special forces to mount assaults on the ground to capture and apprehend ISIL leadership wherever they are found. This is what I meant when I said we were doing this in Somalia and Yemen. Is that something that will be contemplated and is on the table?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I think to really get into any of the specific tactics, Congressman, we want to probably have a closed briefing on that. We can do that.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Certainly, then, let's follow up on that at the appropriate time.

Secretary HAGEL. We can do that.

Mr. LAMBORN. And, also, along the same lines, using boots on the ground, for lack of a better word, to guide and direct close air support, that is something that I think is critical also. And, once again, is that something that we can talk about in this forum? I want to see as many tools in the tool box as necessary so that this plan can be successful, and I think taking things off the table militates against that.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, again, within the confines of an open hearing, I would again say that we are looking at everything, nothing off the table, but I would also point to the success here recently regarding the Haditha Dam, Mosul Dam, and some of these strikes, where it has been Iraqi security forces on the ground with their special forces and our air strikes and we didn't have our people embedded with them and they were very successful. So the Iraqi security forces have capability.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Well, I am glad to hear your answers, Mr. Secretary. My concern is, I am just going to echo what the chairman said earlier, sometimes the President takes things off the table right off the bat, and that that is troubling to me. I want to see as many options on the table as possible.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, if I might, and I think you have got a little time, so I won't indulge anyone else here, I know how that works. I don't think it was a matter, and I know it is not a matter of the President taking options off the table of the American public. I think what he wants to always make sure that the American public is certain and clear of what his intent is and what he as the President of this country is willing to do, but he wants the American people to understand what is it that he is getting them into, what is he asking the American people for, and I think that is the clarity you see. Tactically in these issues, no, he won't take things off the table.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you for that reassurance, and I will continue to be supportive.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. At this time we are going to go to 4 minutes so that we can try to get everybody's questions in before we have to go to votes. Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Had to start with me, didn't you, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being patient and staying here until we freshmen get to ask questions. I very much appreciate that.

Secretary HAGEL. Congresswoman, I was a freshman once, I understand. You ask the best questions.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you. Well, thank you very much. So, you know, I voted no yesterday, and it was a tough no vote for me because I simply have a lot of questions. If—the vote yesterday was on this reauthorization for the \$500 million that expires in just 7—I am sorry, 12 weeks. Why would we not start by asking for that amount of money to arm the Peshmerga and putting more forces and more resources behind the troops in Iraq first before we go to what is a short-term funding for arming these rebel groups in Syria?

Secretary HAGEL. Two answers, Congresswoman. One is we have got to do both, and we are presently supporting the Peshmerga as well as the Iraqi security forces with literally expanded accelerated help, equipment, armaments, and we are doing that and have been doing that, and I noted that in an earlier answer. So it is not an either-or. We believe we need to do both, and we need to get the training and equip part of the moderate Syrian opposition piece started as quickly as possible, because they both fit into the overall strategy as how you defeat ISIL, and you help stabilize those countries, particularly Iraq, and so it is not a matter of not doing one versus the other.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I am concerned that we are starting with the rebels.

General, I had a couple questions for you. If we turn, if we actually train and equip these moderate rebel groups and we send them back in, my understanding is that they don't have much of a command-and-control structure, they are fairly self-identifying, there are a whole bunch of groups, there is no military-like structure like the ISIS and ISIL has, and their first mission is to basically defend and deny territory to ISIS. How are they able to logistically support themselves once we train them and give them this weaponry? How are they going to be able to conduct these operations? Who is going to provide them with the 556 [5.56 millimeter rifle ammunition], the 40 mike-mike [40 millimeter grenade launcher ammunition], the 7.62 [7.62 millimeter machine gun ammunition]? Where is that coming from and are we looking now at relying on contractors or secret ops or covert ops to do that?

General MAYVILLE. Congresswoman, we are looking at all options of how you sustain this effort once we begin, but you do raise an important issue in developing the leadership and finding those within these initial formations that have the aptitude for additional skills. So we are going to have to find who has the aptitude

to be a logistician, who has the aptitude to be a communications expert, and we will build that capability as we build this basic force. The first phase is identify and vet them, create a relationship, give them the basic training, and let them go back and protect their communities. The next thing we will do is we will build off of that with skills, and we will stay connected to them. There will have to be an oversight, there will have to be accountability, and we will have to create a method for doing that with the leadership that we identified within the training.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Just in the last 20 seconds I have, so you are not ruling out the fact that we may be actually turning to a Blackwater or whatever their subsidiary is, Xe International Development Solutions, Academy, whatever they are calling themselves to provide the logistical support in the initial stages? Is that what we are opening ourselves up to?

General MAYVILLE. There has been—we are still in the very early planning of this, but to date, there has been no discussions of anything other than how would we as a military would do this.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentlelady's time has expired. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here, and Mr. Secretary, I think I heard you clearly and concisely say, we are at war and everything is on the table. Is that accurate?

Secretary HAGEL. Yes.

Mr. SCOTT. I think one of the things that is confusing to me and I think confusing the majority of Americans is that that is not consistent with what the President says when he, as one of my colleagues pointed out, takes other actions or potential operations off the table, and my granddad is no longer here, but he was a World War II POW [prisoner of war] and a B-17 pilot, and he would tell you that the first, the first decision is the decision to win and make sure that we are willing to do whatever it takes to win.

Desert Storm was in 1990. We have been in that country, in those countries on and off for 24 years, over half of my life. We have spent trillions of dollars, we have had hundreds of thousands of Americans in there, hundreds of thousands of other people that we have trained, and, General, these 5,000 moderate Syrians ought to be pretty easy to find. I assume they are 10 foot tall and bullet-proof. My question is, how can 5,000 moderate Syrians do what the United States and all of our coalitions could not do in 24 years?

General MAYVILLE. Well, 5,000 moderate opposition groups with basic training to secure their villages will have some effect, but it won't have the decisive effect that you speak to, but it is only one part of a larger effort. That larger effort includes training, continuing to assist in the Iraqi security forces counter ISIL. We will have the use of our airpower to assist where it is necessary, and we are also looking to employ the support, the direct support of partners in the region. So we are going to squeeze on this through multiple venues.

Mr. SCOTT. Then, with due respect, the President should outline that. There should be a separate vote, not a vote on a continuing resolution. I blame this on my leadership as much as I do the President. This is much more serious than an amendment to a con-

tinuing resolution. I would also suggest, you know, the Sunnis and Shi'as have been fighting since the 7th century. We don't understand that war, certainly not all of them participate in it, but when we talk about beheadings, you know, Mr. Secretary, it is my understanding that the Saudis beheaded eight people in the month of August, and they practice one of the strictest forms of Sharia law and do some things over there that by any stretch of the imagination I think any American would consider barbaric. And so how do we pick our friends?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I think the first way I would answer your question is America, I think any country, always responds in its own self-interest. What is our interest here? I think you asked the question when American citizens are publicly killed, murdered, is that in the interest of this country? Well, I think it is. Is it a threat to who we are? I think it is. So you can take that out as far as you want. So that is partly, I think, the answer.

But your bigger question, which is exactly the right question, the history of that area, we can't interject ourselves or impose ourselves on any country or traditions or history, and what we are doing differently is bringing in partners from the region. This, as the President has said, what I said, has to be settled by the countries themselves, and that means the Arab countries, the Muslim countries. We can help, but we can't alone dictate or determine the outcome of that. But it is in our interests.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman's time has expired. Mr. Maffei.

Mr. MAFFEI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, Lieutenant General Mayville, thank you for your service to our country. Can you describe to us what—there is talk about coalition. What are the members of the coalition that actually are going to have people on the ground either as military advisors or troops along with us?

Secretary HAGEL. As I said in my opening testimony, we are close to 50 coalition nations who are—

Mr. MAFFEI. Mr. Secretary, I don't mean to interrupt you, but specifically have committed to having people there arm in arm with us, not just supplies, not just—but actual human beings on the ground helping us with that mission.

Secretary HAGEL. Each country will provide assistance based on their capacities too. Some will be airpower, some will be people. We have had a number of military offers. We are coordinating that now I noted in my testimony. General Allen has the essential responsibility of bringing that together, coordinating each of these pieces. So we are in the process of doing that.

Mr. MAFFEI. Okay, thank you. I am a little bit still confused about the nature of this. The President promises no combat mission, and I know you have been questioned by other folks about sort of what that means, but I am concerned that whether our people are over there on a combat mission, a training mission, advisory mission, they will become targets. Can you just clarify, if we have people that are shot at, they will have, the rules of engagement will say they should defend themselves, correct, sir?

Secretary HAGEL. Oh, absolutely.

Mr. MAFFEI. I appreciate that and I am glad. But won't that then lead to combat missions, maybe not offensive combat missions, but if our people are in harm's way, won't they be in combat?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, anybody in a war zone who has ever been in a war zone, and some of you have, know that if you are in a war zone, you are in combat. What the President has said that there would be no specific American ground combat role. I think that is pretty clear. Yes, if you have advisors in a war, they are in a combat zone, yes. But the role of Americans in that war, as the President has laid out, I think is pretty clear, what he said we will do and what we won't do.

Mr. MAFFEI. Can you or Lieutenant General give us any sense of how many Americans will be put in harm's—how many Americans additionally will be put in harm's way either in the theater or near the theater?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, what I said in regard to the President's announcement last week on what he has ordered now additional American forces into Iraq, by the time they all get there, there will be around 1,600 American forces in Iraq.

Mr. MAFFEI. And they would be in Iraq?

Secretary HAGEL. In Iraq.

Mr. MAFFEI. Not Syria?

Secretary HAGEL. Not Syria. In Iraq.

Mr. MAFFEI. Okay. Just finally, I guess trying to figure out again who exactly we are helping. You speak of sort of the "we" in this, and I know you have been asked similar questions, but I am still fuzzy on how exactly you are going to identify the forces that we can train, we can enhance, and I guess it goes back to my allies question, and are they going to be alone, is this just going to be a few Syrian fighters, 5,000 each? Because it seems to me that if we are training them, yes, we will eventually build up a force there, but in the meantime, won't our enemy build up their force far more than we can catch up?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, a couple answers to your question. It is a beginning. We might be able to do more than 5,000 a year. As I said in my statement, it depends on more training sites, more vetting, more people. We are going to train them in units, equip them in units, not just rebels here and there, so that they are prepared to take on more and more responsibility. With our partners. That is another piece of this. This is an undertaking that is pretty dramatic and sophisticated. It is a beginning, but at the same time, all of the other dynamics of this strategy, what is going on, as General Mayville just noted here a minute ago, are in play at the same time. We are not just relying on that train and equip moderate Syrians.

Mr. MAFFEI. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman's time has expired. Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Mr. Hagel and General Mayville, I really want to thank you for your service across the board, and it has been varied for Secretary Hagel in a number of ways, going back to Vietnam. We really do appreciate that.

You made a comment about combat, so I want to make sure that our troops, the 1,600 that are in Iraq, are going to be compensated

as they should be reference to combat pay, because they are going to be exposed to that at some point in time or could be. Are they going to be?

Secretary HAGEL. Yes, they are now, but let me have General Mayville explain how that is—

Mr. NUGENT. Okay, so those currently in country are receiving combat pay?

General MAYVILLE. Let me not get in front of that important decision that will come to the Secretary, but typically you are talking about hostile duty pay?

Mr. NUGENT. Yes.

General MAYVILLE. And there are a set of procedures clearly outlined and under what conditions one is entitled to that.

Mr. NUGENT. Okay.

General MAYVILLE. And we will apply that standard here, and it will go to the Secretary.

Mr. NUGENT. So the answer is the Secretary will make that decision whether or not?

Secretary HAGEL. Yes, and they will be compensated.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you very much, I appreciate that. You know, I voted no. I will tell you it was difficult, but at the same time, because of all of the briefings I have heard, and you have touched on it, you know, the Syrian force that we are talking about training and equipping, and the reason I voted no was, you know, they have very little organization, there is no—and you mentioned this, there is no political structure in place to support them. I would support an Iraqi issue because there is a political force to at least start talking about how to fix things. Command and control.

We know that at this point in time there is no command and control for the Syrian free forces or whatever you want to call them, and there is for the Iraqis because we helped build that. And training or retraining the Iraqi force is a whole lot easier than trying to train up, by the President's own, you know, description of, you know, guys that are, you know, the regular folks. They may have some combat experience now because they had to fight for their lives, but they are certainly not a trained combat, just as Iraq is because we trained them, even though they have had some issues, but we still have at least a base to start from, and I guess that is why I disagreed with us getting involved in the train-and-equip portion in Syria when we have the ability to do that I think and win in Iraq. I think we have, and I think we have shown that we can work with them.

So it gets a lot, it is a whole lot of hoping and wishing in the fact that—and I know it depends upon the training facilities that we have available, but the testimony has been, you know, 3 training facilities, 5,000 troops. I don't know how—how do we overcome those other things, the command and control, political system, and the actual trained forces, because the fact remains static, obviously, in Syria as we move forward, if you could.

Secretary HAGEL. Well, here, the way I would explain it, and it is my opinion and the opinion of the President that if you are going to defeat ISIL, and that is the objective, as the President has laid out, you are not going to defeat ISIL just in Iraq. Matter of fact,

most of the ISIL threat is in Syria, safe havens, training camps, resources.

Mr. NUGENT. I get that.

Secretary HAGEL. So you are going to have to deal with them in Syria.

Mr. NUGENT. But I would think a step by step, at least an approach where you can drive them out of Iraq while we have the opportunity to, and as we are doing it, focus then back on Syria. I yield back, I apologize.

Secretary HAGEL. We have to do both at the same time.

Mr. NUGENT. I appreciate that.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Kilmer.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us. I am of the opinion that the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force needs to be rescinded and that a more specific authorization needs to be drafted to combat the ISIL threat.

What cautions, what advice and requests would you have for us if we were to consider that effort of drafting a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, as you know, we believe the President has the authority under the AUMF of 2001 to do what he believes that is important to do for the security of this country. He also has said he welcomes the Congress' involvement, support. If the Congress believes that they want to get involved in writing a new authorization of force, that is the prerogative of the Congress. But to go beyond that as to advise you, I am not a lawyer, so I would leave that up to the lawyers and specifically what the White House thinks they would need if that is something that they think they should want to do or need to do.

Mr. KILMER. Is there anything specific that you would want or not want in such an authorization? I understand that you believe you currently have that authorization. I guess the question I have, in one of the briefings we had, it was said we would welcome if Congress wanted to provide a more specific authorization. Any constraints or things that you would want to see in that regard?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, I think anytime—and I am going to be general in this because that is not my area. That is really the President have to make those kinds of decisions. But for us, Department of Defense, who we are always the ones required to implement, we would want to have the Commander in Chief have as much flexibility within the bounds of accountability, which in a co-equal branch of government we have to have, we recognize that, but for us, we have to have that flexibility and I think the Commander in Chief does as well in order to carry out his duties.

Mr. KILMER. The other question I had for you was has the Department begun to consider the second- and third-order effects of providing air support and training and supplies as prescribed by this mission? I am particularly concerned with the wear and tear on our military airplanes and seagoing vessels that may have a higher utilization rate, and as a consequence, require more maintenance than was originally presumed in the President's fiscal year 2015 budget submission. As the presumed \$500 million OCO dollars to train and equip our allies won't cover that initial mainte-

nance, where will the additional money come from, OCO or O&M accounts or through a supplemental request?

Secretary HAGEL. We are looking at all that right now, and you are right, as we pick up the pace on this mission and do the things that we need to do, we are going to most likely have to change some of those numbers, but that is not new. I mean, the world is dangerous and it is fluid and it is dynamic.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Chairman, I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you. At this time I will take my 4 minutes here, and I appreciate you both being here. You know, as we look back on things, I remember Vice President Biden saying the victory in Iraq will be one of the greatest successes of the Obama administration, and as I look out and I see those of you with your combat patches, I would say the success goes to those that were in the field. But that being said, we did succeed and we succeeded with combat troops and using all of our assets, and it was a gift to Iraq that unfortunately has fallen apart.

My concern is when we start talking about counterterrorism operations as opposed to full combat, I have some concerns there. ISIL, to me, is somewhat of a state, not a recognized state, but they actually have territory, they have wealth, and they have an army, and they are different than the typical terrorist effort, and I understand our desire to want to use the Kurds and the Iraqi Army and the Syrian forces that we are talking about.

My concerns stem from the questions you got earlier about who has got the central command here, I mean, who is really calling the shots when you are putting these pieces together, and I have the concern with that, but also in another hearing I had asked is the Iraqi army or the Peshmerga willing and authorized to move into Syria if that is what it takes to destroy this enemy ultimately, especially if our effort with the Syrians is not successful? And the answer I got was no. And to me that is like saying in World War II, well, we will go to Germany, but we won't go in and defeat them. And so what is our contingency here? What are we going to do if this effort in Syria is not successful, knowing that our strongest assets on the ground are not willing to go into Syria where they have safe haven at this point?

Secretary HAGEL. First, I think we recognize that Iraq is a sovereign country, so we don't order Iraq to do anything. We can't.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Understood.

Secretary HAGEL. So if Iraq makes a decision for whatever reason, that is their decision.

Dr. WENSTRUP. But see that to me is their objective is to liberate Iraq from this enemy, from ISIL, but our objective is to destroy ISIL. So I am concerned about the strength of what we have in Syria. We may run them into Syria, and then what if we are not succeeding there?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, that is exactly right, that we are looking at this from a borderless dynamic, that ISIL is a threat to all the nations of the Middle East. Right now they are principally focused in—their safe haven is in Syria, which is ungovernable, as you know, in the eastern part of Syria, so with the strategy that we

have laid out and we are implementing with partners, partners again essential, strong, united, inclusive Iraqi government essential, we have got the—must-have Muslim Arab partners essential as well as other partners in order to destroy ISIL, and you are exactly right, it isn't by borders. We are not dealing with that. Each will play roles where they can.

Dr. WENSTRUP. My time is running out, but I would hope maybe in another setting, a classified setting, perhaps, we can find out what some of those contingencies might be because I know the good general has already anticipated some of these things as a strategist, and it is not necessarily something we want to expose to everyone. So.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I appreciate that, and I yield back my time. At this time they have called votes, and so we are going to break and I have been told we are going to return after the votes. And I, again, appreciate both of you for your time today. And I do encourage members to come back, even some of those that have left and get them back. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. BYRNE [presiding]. The committee will come back to order and the chair recognizes Ms. Bordallo.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this meeting.

Secretary Hagel and Lieutenant General Mayville, thank you for appearing this morning and this afternoon before this committee, and I thank you for your steadfast leadership and dedication to service, and I applaud, I want to go on record as saying that I applaud the President for his four-point strategy to defeat ISIL.

Now, the first question I have is, as you can imagine, talk of these actions against ISIL have stoked some concern in the Asia-Pacific region that the rebalance strategy will be abandoned or not fulfilled. I don't necessarily share these concerns, but I was hoping that you might be able to touch on how we balance our efforts to degrade and destroy ISIL and meanwhile keep to our commitments in the rebalance strategy in the Asia-Pacific area. Secretary Hagel.

Secretary HAGEL. Congresswoman, thank you, and I think your question is an important one because, as we all know, the world is faced with many threats, America is faced with many threats, and we always have to keep in mind all of our interests around the world, and certainly the rebalance to Asia-Pacific is one very clear commitment and interest we have.

Our efforts against ISIL will not affect our commitment to Asia-Pacific, as the President has made very clear. That commitment, that rebalancing will continue, and I think we have, over the last couple of years in particular, have made great progress as we have enhanced our relationships and partnerships in your part of the world, and very much appreciate Guam's role in all of this because you are a key, key area, and the people that you represent I want to also thank for their hospitality to all of our men and women who serve there.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, and I thank you for your very direct answer to my question.

The other one is I noted on Tuesday that Chairman Dempsey talked about how this is a generation problem, and this battle against ISIL will be protracted, a protracted war, and with that in mind, what is the exit strategy for U.S. service members? If we are doing our job right over there, at some point our training teams should work themselves out of a job as the countries in the Middle East take on these roles. So what is the plan for the exit?

Secretary HAGEL. You are correct that our role and our work with our partners is with an exit in mind, but let's start with what we are doing and how we are doing it. First, the responsibility for bringing Iraq back into a strong position to defend itself is a responsibility of the Iraqis, the Iraqi security forces, Peshmerga, the government, the new government of Prime Minister Abadi, and bringing all the various segments of that country together.

So it is not our responsibility. We are going to help them do that, we are going to support them in their efforts to do that. We will keep, obviously, some contingency of force there, but this is a different situation than we have had before. It is their responsibility and their fight, but we will help them.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. I really appreciate your answers to my questions, and Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. BYRNE. The gentlelady yields back. The chair recognizes himself for 4 minutes.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being patient with us. We had a series of votes, and there were some of us that didn't have a chance to ask you some questions. We appreciate your sticking around for this. I voted for the McKeon Amendment yesterday, but I recognized in doing so that it was one element, and it has a limited duration, and we will be back, at the very least, to consider what we are going to do about that one element, but obviously it is one element of what is going to be a much bigger strategy, and the President has some key decisions to make there, and we heard you talk about some of those today.

My first question is, is it the President's intent, your intent to come back to us with a bigger strategy, the full strategy so we can understand how that element and other elements fit together and operate together? And, if so, will you bring that back with a new AUMF because there are a lot of us that believe there needs to be a new AUMF, and we can get into the legal arguments about it, but as a matter of good policy, would you think that in addition to just giving us a strategy, there should be an AUMF that accompanies it?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you. On the AUMF, as you heard me say this morning and what the President has said, we believe, he believes he has the authority to do what he needs to do to keep this country safe and to degrade and defeat ISIL within the statutory authority that now exists. He has also said, as I have said, that he would welcome the President—or the Congress' involvement, would welcome a rewrite of any of those authorizations. That is up to the Congress. But in the meantime, he feels strongly that he needs to take action on these threats now.

As to strategy, the strategy that the President generally laid out to the American people last week as I am up here testifying on

today—Secretary Kerry is as well, has been—I was in the Senate a couple of days ago as you know. Other cabinet members have been up, we have been up briefing over the last 2 weeks, as you know, in closed-door sessions, and I am sure you have been part of those briefings, all in an effort to further define and bring some clarity to the strategy, how are we implementing it, what resources we are going to continue to need, what are the dynamics to each of these.

So I don't think the strategy changes. Obviously as we comply with the continuing resolution limits, having to come back in December with more information, and I suspect in the next 3 months we will have more fidelity and clarity on a number of things. As you know, these are fluid and dynamic challenges. We have to be prepared for that, be ready for that. So the basic strategy I don't think is going to change or shift, but as we evolve in our requirements and how we are implementing that strategy, will, I suspect by necessity, be redefined and changed and shifted just the tactics of how we are implementing it.

Mr. BYRNE. Well, let me offer this observation; not advice, just an observation. In listening to my colleagues in the House as we were debating the amendment, as we were talking among ourselves, I think it would be very helpful to you in getting successful votes in the future if there was a clearly articulated strategy, complete, comprehensive strategy. And I think it would equally help if it was accompanied with a new AUMF. There are some of us that took the vote yesterday knowing that it was of a limited time duration, that we were only talking about one element, and I think it would strengthen our ability to support you and support the President, and perhaps gain some more votes if we had it all laid out for us, it was all put together in a package.

I am not trying to get into a legal argument with you or the President about legal authority. I am talking about good policy. So I just offer that observation to you and hope that you will take that back to the President.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you, I will. I understand what you are saying.

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you very much, sir. The chair recognizes Mr. Gallego for 4 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Mr. Secretary, thank you for hanging out and staying. I know that, you know, many times when this row gets to ask questions, the witness has to leave, so I appreciate the courtesy.

Very quickly, when we are talking about strategy, I mean, one of the things that I hear is that, you know, we are very capable of winning battles, but in the long run, we lose the war. That is certainly the impression that so many of the Iraq war, the second Iraq war veterans have in the district that I represent. And, as you know, it is a district that, it is bigger than 29 states, I mean, it is about 24 percent or so of the land area of Texas, it is a huge swath, disparate opinions, but there seems to be a good consensus that, you know, the strategy that we had outlined is a strategy for a specific purpose, a limited purpose as opposed to a more big picture long term, you know. And the perception is we have seen this movie before. What makes us think that the ending on this par-

ticular case is going to be any different than the endings that we have seen before? What makes this different from other times?

Secretary HAGEL. Well, first, I think that the strategy that the President laid out corresponds very directly and clearly with the threat, and that threat has been identified and defined, I think, pretty clearly by the President and a number of us. This threat that ISIL presents to the United States, to our interests, to our allies, certainly to the region, we believe is very clear.

Now, that said, the strategy that the President has announced that we are in the process of finalizing and in the process of implementing is different in many ways. Number one, it includes the, not just the strategic but the tactical buy-in of many partners, including partners in that region, including Muslim Arab countries.

Second, it defines our role in a very clear way. As the President said, there will not be American combat responsibilities on the ground. We will have support missions where we can help, where we have unique capabilities, along with our partners. Another essential part of this is a new Iraqi government that must bring an inclusiveness and a representation to not just the government but the governing, where the new Prime Minister brings all the people in.

I think the clear threat that ISIL presents to all of those countries is so clear now and the common interests are so clear that that is different from anything I can recall in how we have, certainly in the recent, in our recent history how we have gone about anything.

Mr. GALLEGO. One of the important things that I would ask you to keep in mind as you move forward is, as you talk about getting investments from others, is that we need to make sure that the American people are invested in this as well. I mean, you know more than most even in this room about what happens when an American public is not supportive of U.S. military action, and it is very important that the public be kept engaged and that they be supportive of the President's action and, frankly, America's actions overseas.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you, I get that and I think, again—in fact, I know one of the reasons the President wanted to make that address to the American public last week was for that very reason, and we will continue to make that point. Thank you.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you.

Mr. BYRNE. The chair recognizes Mrs. Davis for 4 minutes.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much, and thank you, Mr. Secretary, for staying. I appreciate it.

You know, we know that this is just fraught with complications, but my belief is that the consequences of doing nothing is also fraught with great risks, and I appreciate the fact of moving forward when we don't have all the answers clearly. You can tell from the questions here and the questions throughout the last few weeks and the way, frankly, that the vote came up, good bipartisan yes and no, and so that means that we all have a lot of work to do, I think, and I know you appreciate that.

The President requested that authority in order to provide direct military training for our moderate Syrian rebels so that they have

an alternative to ISIS, but the concern is partly the lack of unity among the disparate parts of those who have not chosen to join and are engaged in other areas. But I wonder if you could talk about that difficulty that we are going to face with whether it is dual alliances, the desire to defeat or to certainly weaken the Assad regime versus pushing back against ISIL.

Have we ever trained and worked with a new group of troops who have that kind of dual goal, and perhaps it is not even dual? How do you see that coming together? I think the other concern is we obviously are looking for intel on the ground, and yet when it comes to air support and the intel on the ground, which is why we are training the Syrian forces first in local communities and then hopefully to be more helpful in the broader goals, we are going to need to have more, whether it is partner support on the ground or U.S. support on the ground as well. And, again, in terms of how we describe that strategy, I think that is very important to people, and that is another area that we really haven't heard much about.

Secretary HAGEL. Congresswoman, thank you. You ask a very important question, and you led with that, with the reality that it is complicated. I suspect Members of Congress hear that maybe all too often on all issues, but this one is complicated, and your question does reflect that complication.

Let me answer it this way: The moderate opposition forces that we will be vetting, and that process I think we talked at some length about this morning, how we would do that and so on, are people in Syria, people who have lived in Syria, who are citizens of Syria, whose families have lived there for a long time, they are being and have been squeezed right now—are being squeezed—by both the Assad regime and by ISIL and other terrorist groups.

Right now there is nothing that they have in any coordinated organized way to give anyone in Syria who wants their country back and some kind of a future of peace and stability for their families and themselves any hope or any possibilities to build on. So the moderate opposition understands it is not a choice between necessarily ISIL and Assad. Yes, ISIL is who we are focused on, and that is our primary mission and objective here is to destroy ISIL, but the reality is that people that we will train have to deal with that, both of those realities, and they need a new political base that will, we believe, will come from this possibility of organization and hope that we can help with a new moderate opposition.

Mr. BYRNE. The gentlelady's time has expired. The chair recognizes Mr. Langevin for 4 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here today.

Is this on? Okay, there we are. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, I was one of those individuals who voted in favor of the resolution supporting the President's plan last night. I did it with mixed emotions, and I know it is not a perfect plan, but I think we need to start somewhere, and I believe ISIL does pose a threat to the homeland and to our allies around the world based on the knowledgeable testimony I have heard from this committee and my work on the Intelligence Committee.

My concern is, though, that there are going to be boots on the ground that are going to be required, but we don't want them to

be U.S. boots, and I support the President's position there, and I know you probably have talked about this already, but for my knowledge, I need to know the commitment that we have from our neighbors in the region in terms of what they are going to be able to do to put boots on the ground, because my constituents are really adamant that they don't want a big U.S. footprint involved in this with forces on the ground, but, you know, and I know, I am concerned, we hear that it is going to take up to a year potentially to train the forces that we are training in Syria, and that is obviously too long a timeframe.

If we had nations in the region who were willing to put boots on the ground now, at least to start with, it would be something to hold us over until those forces are trained and are going to go in and actually battle ISIL on the ground. So would you comment on that?

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you, I will comment on it. First on your question on coalition partners and what are they committed to do and when will they start doing it, and all of the follow-up questions that go with it, just as an example. I understand this morning, I have not seen the report, but I knew it was forthcoming that President Hollande announced that France would be involved in military operations with us to destroy ISIL over Iraq, the next piece of this, Syria, and so on, as far as I know they have not made a decision, but that is just but one, since it just happened this morning, an example of how we are having more and more of these coalition partners come forward.

But the bigger question that you asked specifically about partners in the region, coalition partners in the region, how are they going to play a role as we take time to build these moderate Syrian forces in our train-and-equip program.

Again, I would emphasize the importance of the entire dimension of the strategy. The train-and-equip portion of the moderate Syrian opposition is part of that, but so is a new Iraqi inclusive government to bring in the Sunnis and Shi'as so we can start to get the Sunni tribes in western Iraq back off of that support of ISIL and back with the government. Coalition partners, their involvement through military action, our air strikes will continue to help Iraqi security forces continue to work the offensive, take back territory, hold territory that they had lost to ISIL, stabilize Iraq.

All these different dimensions are in play at the same time. Yes, it is going to take some time to start training these people, the right people, the vetted people in groups where we are not just training one or two terrorists, or antiterrorists, or fighters, but groups have discipline, strategy, tactics, weapons, that they can offer then a base of a beginning in Syria, not just a military option, but also political opposition to build around that. So it is going to take some time, but it is all these other elements of the strategy working at the same time toward the same end.

Mr. BYRNE. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming today, thank you for your patience and your candor. This is a great threat facing the people of our country. You are very concerned about it, and we

share your concern. We know that this needs to be a partnership between you and the President and the Congress, and we want to continue to work with you, and we appreciate the further communications we know we are going to be receiving from you.

Secretary HAGEL. Congressman, thank you very much, and I very much appreciate the questions, the attention, and the support.

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you, sir, and this committee is adjourned.

Secretary HAGEL. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 2:32 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

AS PREPARED – EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
HEARING ON THE ADMINISTRATION’S STRATEGY FOR ISIL
WASHINGTON, DC
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2014**

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, Members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity this morning to discuss the President’s strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL.

As you all know, yesterday I joined President Obama at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, where he received a briefing from the Commander of U.S. Central Command, General Austin, on operational plans to implement our ISIL strategy, and met with representatives from more than 40 partner nations.

I am joined here today by the Joint Staff’s Director for Operations, Lieutenant General Bill Mayville. As our “J-3,” Lieutenant General Mayville helps oversee military operations in Iraq and works closely with CENTCOM to develop our military plans.

As many of you know, Chairman Dempsey is in Europe on a long-scheduled trip to meet with our key allies. He is consulting with our closest allies in the fight against ISIL, and tomorrow he will attend a NATO Chiefs of Defense conference in Lithuania – where they will discuss the ISIL threat as well as Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

The Defense Department’s civilian and military leaders are in complete agreement with every component of the President’s strategy, and we strongly believe it offers the best opportunity to degrade and destroy ISIL. The President, Chairman Dempsey, General Austin and I are in full alignment on our objectives, and the military strategy necessary to achieve them.

However, as President Obama has repeatedly made clear, American military power alone cannot eradicate the threats posed by ISIL to the United States, our allies, and our friends and partners in the region. Iraq’s continued political progress toward a more inclusive and representative government will be critical. We believe that Iraq’s new Prime Minister is committed to bringing all Iraqis together against ISIL. To support him and the Iraqi people in their fight, the coalition will need to use all its instruments of power – military, law enforcement, economic, diplomatic, and intelligence – in coordination with countries in the region.

To succeed, this strategy will also require a strong partnership between the Executive Branch and Congress. The President has made it a priority to consult with Congressional leadership on the ISIL challenge, as have Vice President Biden, Secretary Kerry, and many senior members of the administration. I appreciate the opportunities I’ve had to discuss our strategy with members of this committee and other members of the Senate and the House over the last couple of weeks. We will continue these consultations.

The ISIL Threat to the United States

ISIL poses a real threat to all countries in the Middle East, our European allies, and to America.

In the last few months, the world has seen ISIL’s barbarity up close as its fighters advanced across western and northern Iraq and slaughtered thousands of innocent civilians – including Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish Iraqis, and religious minorities. ISIL’s murder of two U.S. journalists outraged the American people and exposed the depravity of ISIL’s ideology and tactics to the world. Over the weekend, we saw ISIL’s murder of a British citizen. ISIL now

AS PREPARED – EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

controls a vast swath of eastern Syria and western and northern Iraq, including towns and cities in these areas.

ISIL has gained strength by exploiting the civil war in Syria and sectarian strife in Iraq. As it has seized territory across both countries and acquired significant resources and advanced weapons, ISIL has employed a violent combination of terrorist, insurgent, and conventional military tactics.

Its goal is to become the new vanguard of the global extremist movement and establish an extremist Islamic Caliphate across the Middle East. It considers itself the rightful inheritor of Osama bin Laden's legacy.

While ISIL clearly poses an immediate threat to American citizens in Iraq and our interests in the Middle East, we also know that thousands of foreign fighters – including Europeans and more than 100 Americans – have traveled to Syria. With passports that give them relative freedom of movement, these fighters can exploit ISIL's safe haven to plan, coordinate, and carry out attacks against the United States and Europe.

Although the intelligence community has not yet detected specific plotting against the U.S. homeland, ISIL has global aspirations and, as President Obama has made clear, ISIL's leaders have threatened America and our allies. If left unchecked, ISIL will directly threaten our homeland and our allies.

Building a Coalition Is Key to President Obama's Strategy

In his address to the nation last week, President Obama announced that the United States will lead a broad multinational coalition to roll back the ISIL threat.

More than 40 nations have already expressed their willingness to participate in this effort, and more than 30 nations have indicated their readiness to offer military support. President Obama, Vice President Biden, Secretary Kerry and I and others are working to unite and expand this coalition. At the NATO Summit in Wales, Secretary Kerry and I convened a meeting of key partners in the coalition. I then went to Georgia and Turkey. The Georgians made clear that they want to help. Turkey, by virtue of its geography and its common interest in destroying ISIL, which is holding nearly 50 Turkish diplomats hostage, will also play an important role in this effort.

Secretary Kerry convened a meeting in Jeddah last week with the Foreign Ministers from the six Gulf Cooperation Council nations, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. And all 22 nations of the Arab League adopted a resolution at their summit in Cairo calling for comprehensive measures to combat ISIL. Earlier this week in Paris, President Hollande of France – who traveled to Iraq last weekend – hosted a conference attended by the UN Security Council permanent members, European and Arab leaders, and representatives of the EU, Arab League and United Nations. They all pledged to help Iraq in the fight against ISIL, including through military assistance.

Key allies such as Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia are already contributing military support and other partners have begun to make specific offers. At next week's UN General Assembly, we expect that additional nations will begin making commitments across the spectrum of capabilities, building on the strong Chapter VII UN Security Council Resolution adopted last month calling on all member states to take measures to counter ISIL and suppress the flow of foreign fighters to ISIL. Also, next week President Obama will chair a meeting of the UN Security Council to further mobilize the international community.

AS PREPARED – EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

As you all know, former International Security Assistance Force Commander and Acting CENTCOM Commander General John Allen, has been designated to serve as Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. General Allen will work in a civilian, diplomatic capacity to coordinate, build, and sustain the coalition, drawing on his extensive experience in the region. He will work closely with General Austin to ensure that coalition efforts are aligned across all elements of our strategy.

Implementing President Obama's Strategy

In his address to the nation, the President outlined the four elements of this strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. Let me now describe how we are implementing this whole of government approach.

1. Broader Air Campaign

First, in close coordination with the new Iraqi government, we are broadening our air campaign against ISIL targets.

To protect Americans threatened by ISIL's advances and to prevent humanitarian catastrophe, the U.S. military has already conducted more than 170 successful airstrikes.

These strikes have disrupted ISIL tactically, and helped buy time for the Iraqi government to form an inclusive and broad-based governing coalition led by the new Prime Minister. That was one of President Obama's essential preconditions for taking further action against ISIL, because the Iraqi people must be united in their opposition to ISIL in order to defeat them. This is ultimately *their* fight.

The new, broader air campaign against ISIL targets will enable the Iraqi security forces – including Kurdish forces – to continue to stay on the offensive and recapture territory from ISIL and hold it.

The President of the United States has the constitutional and statutory authority to use military force against ISIL in Syria as well as Iraq. Because ISIL operates freely across the Iraqi-Syrian border, and maintains a safe haven in Syria, our actions will not be restrained by a border that exists in name only.

CENTCOM's plan includes targeted actions against ISIL safe havens in Syria – including its command and control, logistics capabilities, and infrastructure. General Dempsey and I have both approved the CENTCOM plan, which General Austin briefed to the President in Tampa yesterday.

2. Increased Support for Iraqi Security Forces & the Syrian Moderate Opposition

The second element of the strategy is to increase our support for forces fighting ISIL on the ground.

To support Iraqi and Kurdish forces, the President announced last week that we would deploy an additional 475 American troops to Iraq.

Part of that number includes approximately 150 advisors and support personnel to supplement forces already in Iraq conducting assessments of the Iraqi Security Forces. This assessment mission is now transitioning to an advise-and-assist mission, with more than 15 teams embedding with Iraqi Security Forces at the headquarters level to provide strategic and operational advice and assistance.

AS PREPARED – EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

By the time all these forces arrive, there will be approximately 1,600 U.S. personnel in Iraq responding to the ISIL threat. But, as the President reaffirmed yesterday in Tampa, American forces will not have a combat mission on the ground.

Instead, these advisors will continue to support Iraqi and Kurdish forces, including the government's plans to stand up Iraqi National Guard units to help Sunni communities defeat ISIL.

The best counterweights to ISIL are local forces and local citizens. As you know, in June, the President asked Congress for the necessary authority for DoD to train and equip moderate Syrian opposition forces, and \$500 million to fund this program. I appreciate yesterday's House vote to amend the Continuing Resolution with language authorizing this train and equip program.

Saudi Arabia will host the training program for this mission, and the Saudis have offered funding and assistance with recruiting and vetting.

The \$500 million request the President made in June for this train and equip program reflects CENTCOM's estimate of the cost to train, equip, and resupply more than 5,000 opposition forces over one year. This is the beginning of a multi-year, scalable, effort designed to eventually produce an even larger opposition force.

The package of assistance that we initially provide would consist of small arms, vehicles, and basic equipment like communications, as well as tactical and more advanced training. As these forces prove their effectiveness on the battlefield, we would be prepared to provide increasingly sophisticated types of assistance to the most trusted commanders and capable forces. The goal is not to achieve numerical parity with ISIL, but to ensure that moderate Syrian forces are superior fighters. Our goal is to undercut ISIL's recruitment ... and to enable the Syrian opposition to add to the pressure ISIL is already facing from the Iraqi Security Forces and Kurdish Forces. We want to force ISIL into a three-front battle against more capable local forces.

A rigorous vetting process will be critical to the success of this program. DoD will work closely with the State Department, the intelligence community, and our partners in the region to screen and vet the forces we train and equip. We will monitor them closely to ensure that weapons do not fall into the hands of radical elements of the opposition, ISIL, the Syrian regime, or other extremist groups. There will always be risk in a program like this, but we believe that risk is justified given the threat ISIL poses – and the necessity of having capable partners on the ground in Syria.

As we pursue this program, the United States will continue to press for a political resolution to the Syrian conflict resulting in the end of the Assad regime. Assad has lost all legitimacy to govern. He has created the conditions that allowed ISIL and other terrorist groups to gain ground and terrorize and slaughter the Syrian population. The United States will not coordinate or cooperate with the Assad regime.

3. Preventing Homeland Attacks

The third element of the President's strategy is an all-inclusive approach to preventing attacks from ISIL against the homelands of the United States and our allies. In concert with our international partners, the United States will draw on intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic, and economic tools to cut off ISIL's funding, improve our intelligence, strengthen homeland defense, and stem the flow of foreign fighters.

AS PREPARED – EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

The United States and our allies have been stepping up efforts to identify and counter threats emanating from Syria against our homelands. This includes increased intelligence sharing. Working with DoD's partners at the National Counterterrorism Center, the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and across the Intelligence Community, our terrorist screening and analytic databases now have special threat cases linking together known actors and potential foreign fighters, making it easier and faster to update them regularly with new information. DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson has directed enhanced screening at 25 overseas airports with direct flights to the U.S. – a step that the United Kingdom and other countries have also taken.

The Departments of Justice and Homeland Security have launched an initiative to partner with local communities to counter extremist recruiting, and the Department of Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence is working with coalition partners to disrupt ISIL's financing and expose their activities.

4. Continued Humanitarian Assistance

The final element of the President's strategy is to continue providing humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians displaced or threatened by ISIL.

Alongside the Government of Iraq, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and France, U.S. troops have already delivered lifesaving aid to thousands of threatened Iraqi civilians on Mt. Sinjar and the Iraqi town of Amirli.

Our total humanitarian assistance to displaced Iraqis is now more than \$186 million in fiscal year 2014.

The United States is also the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance for the millions of Syrians affected by the civil war. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, the United States has committed almost \$3 billion in humanitarian assistance to those affected by the civil war.

Conclusion

All four elements of this strategy require a significant commitment of resources on the part of the United States and our coalition partners.

This effort will not be easy or brief. We are at war with ISIL, as we are with al Qaeda. But destroying ISIL will require more than military efforts alone ... it will require political progress in the region, and effective partners on the ground in Iraq and Syria. As President Obama said yesterday in Tampa, "we cannot do for the Iraqis what they must do for themselves... we can't do it for them, but this is an effort that calls on America's unique abilities – and responsibilities – to lead."

As the Congress and the Administration work together, we know this effort will take time. The President has outlined a clear, comprehensive, and workable strategy to achieve our goals and protect our interests. Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Thank you.

###

Chuck Hagel

Secretary of Defense

Chuck Hagel served as the 24th Secretary of Defense from February 2013 to February 2015. During his tenure, he directed significant steps to modernize America's partnerships and alliances, advance the rebalance in Asia-Pacific, bolster support for European allies, and enhance defense cooperation in the Middle East while overseeing the end of America's combat mission in Afghanistan. In addition, he led major initiatives for service members and their families, including increasing resources for suicide prevention, combating sexual assault, and accounting for missing personnel. Further, Secretary Hagel improved partnerships with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to include health record interoperability, service treatment record transferability, and continuity of mental health services and support. Secretary Hagel launched the Defense Innovation Initiative to better prepare the Pentagon for future threats, and enacted comprehensive reforms to the Nuclear Enterprise and Military Health system. He is the only Vietnam veteran and the first enlisted combat veteran to serve as Secretary of Defense.



Hagel served two terms in the United States Senate (1997-2009) representing the state of Nebraska. Hagel was a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; and Intelligence Committees. He Chaired the Foreign Relations International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion Subcommittee; and the Banking Committee's International Trade and Finance, and Securities Subcommittees. Hagel also served as the Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and the Senate Climate Change Observer Group.

Previously, Secretary Hagel was a Distinguished Professor at Georgetown University, Co-Chairman of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, Chairman of the Atlantic Council, Chairman of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee, and Co-Chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Corporate Council. He served as a member of the Secretary of Defense's Policy Board, Secretary of Energy's Blue Ribbon Commission on the Future of Nuclear Power, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Board of Directors and Systemic Risk Council; as a Senior Advisor to Gallup; and on the Advisory Boards of Corsair Capital, Deutsche Bank America, M.I.C. Industries, Bread for the World, Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation, Center for the Study of the Presidency, Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission, George C. Marshall Foundation, Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Global Strategy Forum, Global Zero, Hamilton Project, Initiative for Global Development, Lung Cancer Alliance, International Center for the Study Of Radicalization and Political Violence, National Bureau of Asian Research's Next Generation Leadership Board, Ploughshares Fund, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, U.S. Institute of Peace Middle East Senior Working Group, U.S. Middle East Project, America Abroad Media, American Security Project, and The Washington Center.

Prior to his election to the U.S. Senate, Hagel was president of McCarthy & Company, an investment banking firm in Omaha, Nebraska. In the mid-1980's, Hagel co-founded VANGUARD Cellular Systems, Inc., a publicly traded corporation. He was President and CEO of the World USO, Private Sector Council (PSC), and Chief Operating Officer of the 1990 Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations (G-7 Summit). Hagel also served as Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration under President Ronald Reagan and Deputy Commissioner General of the 1982 World's Fair.

He is the author of the book, *America: Our Next Chapter* and was the subject of a 2006 book by Charlyne Berens entitled, *Chuck Hagel: Moving Forward*.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Hagel and his wife, Lilibet, have a daughter (Allyn) and son (Ziller).

Lt. Gen. William C. Mayville Jr.
Director for Operations, J-3

Lieutenant General William C. Mayville, Jr. graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1982, branched Infantry and began his career as a Weapons Platoon Leader, Rifle Platoon Leader, and Company Executive Officer with the 1st Battalion, 75th Rangers at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia.

Following attendance at the Infantry Officers Advance Course, LTG Mayville served as a Maintenance Officer and Company Commander in 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 7th Infantry Regiment, 3d Infantry Division. He served as the Brigade Adjutant for the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division and later, the Battalion Operations Officer for 3d Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. He subsequently served in the 75th Ranger Regiment as the Logistics Officer (S 4) and Regimental Executive Officer before taking command of 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82d Airborne Division. Following Battalion Command, he was assigned as Chief of Plans and Training, J3 Operations, at the Joint Special Operations Command.

In June 2002, LTG Mayville assumed command of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy and commanded the Brigade during its airborne assault in northern Iraq as part of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM in March, 2003. Following Brigade Command, he served as Chief of Staff for US Army Southern European Command and the Combined Joint Task Force 76, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.

His assignments as a General Officer include Deputy Director for Operations, J 3 and Deputy Director for Plans and Policy, J 5, for United States European Command; Deputy Commanding General for Support, 82d Airborne Division and Combined Joint Task Force 82, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, and the Director of Operations for HQ, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). LTG Mayville commanded the First Infantry Division "The Big Red One"—deploying to OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM and commanding coalition operations in Regional Command East.

LTG Mayville's awards and decorations include the Distinguish Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with Valor and Oak Leaf Cluster, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Achievement Medal, second award of the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Master Parachutist Badge (with two Bronze Stars), Pathfinder Badge, and the Ranger Tab. His military and civilian education includes the Command and General Staff College, the Naval War College, and the Georgia Institute of Technology.



Lt. Gen. William C. Mayville Jr.

Director for Operations, J-3

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. KLINE

Mr. KLINE. Secretary Hagel, you testified that reports of President Obama personally selecting each target in Syria or President Obama individually authorizing each target nominated for strike in Syria were erroneous. If the reports are wrong and the President is not personally selecting targets, please answer the following: To whom has the President delegated this selection authority and who will be nominating and giving final approval for prosecution of targets in Syria?

Secretary HAGEL. General Austin, the Commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) has been delegated the authority to select and engage targets in Syria. General Austin has further delegated the authority to engage targets in Syria to the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) and the Commander, Task Force 94-7 (TF 94-7). Targets for deliberate engagement are vetted through the Intelligence Community at the request of CENTCOM's Intelligence Directorate. This vetting ensures the accuracy of the supporting intelligence. Once vetted, each target is validated at CENTCOM to ensure it falls within the Law of War and supports the CENTCOM Commander's intent and objectives. These vetted and validated targets are then approved for strike by General Austin upon nomination by the CFACC, TF 94-7, or the CENTCOM Intelligence Directorate. Dynamic targets, also known as targets of opportunity, are approved for engagement through the appropriate target engagement authority.

Mr. KLINE. Please provide the committee a "wire diagram" of the command relationships and responsibilities that have been created for the ongoing operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), include all partner (coalition) nations and their responsibilities and authorities and annotate any national caveats coalition partners have placed on their use in the on-going campaign against ISIL.

Secretary HAGEL and General MAYVILLE. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. KLINE. Under what rules of engagement (ROE) will our forces be operating? Please provide legal and layman definitions and examples of the ROE that we are currently operating under and plan to utilize in future operations.

Secretary HAGEL and General MAYVILLE. U.S. forces will be operating under the Standing Rules of Engagement (ROE) that apply to operations conducted overseas. In addition, the Executive Orders for operations in Iraq and Syria have provided mission specific ROE. All the ROE are classified.

The mission specific ROE authorize the use of force against two specifically designated groups, which means that these declared hostile forces may be targeted based on status. Forces that have been declared hostile for operations in Iraq and Syria include both the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and Khorasan Group. U.S. forces use multiple forms of intelligence to determine whether or not the individual or equipment being targeted is a member of the declared hostile forces.

U.S. forces always retain the inherent right of self-defense. Additionally, I authorize the use of force to defend other military and civilian personnel as well as critical infrastructure. In addition to the individuals designated by me, the Commander, U.S. Central Command has authority to designate additional military forces, civilian personnel, and critical infrastructure for protection under collective self-defense. General Austin has designated all partner nation coalition forces as eligible for protection under collective self-defense. U.S. forces have used this collective self-defense in operations that defend American citizens, internally displace people in vicinity of Sinjar and Kobani, and Iraqi Security Forces.

The ROE also authorize entry in the land, internal waters, territorial seas, and air space of specifically designated nations. The entry authorization supports operations in Iraq and Syria and also allows for entry for the specific purpose of personnel recovery operations in surrounding nations, if necessary.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. TSONGAS

Ms. TSONGAS. Forbes magazine recently wrote an article on DOD's decision to reduce our intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities by 50%

given the proposed retirement of the U-2 aircraft. The committee understands the U-2 currently provides 75 percent of our actionable intelligence. Several combatant commanders are on record supporting the capabilities of the U-2 over the Global Hawk. Public law in the FY2007 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and again in the FY2012 NDAA preclude the retirement of the U-2 until ISR gaps caused by the retirement of the U-2 are mitigated. The law further stipulates that “until the capability to be fielded at the same time or before the U-2 aircraft retirement would result in equal or greater capability available to the commanders of the combatant commands.” Can you provide details on the transition plan that allows a thoughtful transition strategy from the U-2 to the Global Hawk without creating an ISR gaps?

Secretary HAGEL. The plan to upgrade the capabilities of the Global Hawk sensor and transition ISR missions from the U-2 to the Global Hawk is detailed in the office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation’s (CAPE) classified report to Congress. This report was prepared in response to section 143(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2014 and was briefed to members of the House Armed Services Committee on September 5, 2014. The Department of Defense Special Access Program Central Office (SAPCO) is coordinating with your office to arrange a discussion in which CAPE can review with you the classified details of the plan.

Ms. TSONGAS. Several combatant commanders have expressed their concerns about our ISR capabilities and capacity? What investments are being made to maintain the necessary multispectral capabilities in order to preclude a gap in ISR capacity and capability as the U-2 is retired?

General MAYVILLE. The retirement of the U-2 will create a multi-spectral gap until the required equipment for the RQ-4 is developed. The Air Force is assessing options for the transition of U-2 like capabilities to the RQ-4. In accordance with a \$10M FY14 NDAA Congressional Mark, the Air Force is conducting a study to assess the cost and feasibility to transition U-2 sensor capabilities to the RQ-4. The results of this study are pending and distribution to the Congressional committees will occur by the spring of 2015.

The FY15 PB provides investments to transition unique U-2 sensors to the RQ-4, mitigating some gaps in collection capabilities with the U-2 retirement. USAF estimates U-2 sensor transition costs at less than \$500M over the next 10 years. The sensor transition will be deferred if BCA funding levels are realized.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY DR. FLEMING

Dr. FLEMING. President Obama has stated: “Our objective is clear and that is to degrade and destroy the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) so it is no longer a threat.” While the President has repeatedly promised no combat boots on the ground, earlier this week General Dempsey testified in a Senate hearing that: “To be clear, if we reach the point where I believe our advisers should accompany Iraqi troops on attacks against specific ISIL targets, I will recommend that to the President.”

Could you please clarify: Will the President accept the recommendations of his top military leaders in order to destroy ISIL so that it is no longer a threat as the President has stated is his goal, or will this administration allow ISIS to continue its operations and conduct terrorist attacks in Iraq should the planned air campaign fail to destroy ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. The President has been clear: he is in regular discussions with his national security team on countering ISIL. The Chairman is a member of that team and his role is to provide military advice to the President. As events on the ground evolve, the President will continue to consider advice from his entire team.

Dr. FLEMING. I am concerned about the safety of our airmen as they conduct the campaign this administration is proposing. The President has stated that there will be no combat troops on the ground, and yet as we know from the experience of Iraq and Afghanistan, and as has been explained by senior Air Force leaders, special operations forces are needed on the ground in Syria in order for air strikes to be successful. General Dempsey testified in a Senate hearing earlier this week that U.S. forces will be prepared to provide search and rescue missions if pilots are shot down and to make the mission successful.

Could you please clarify as to how this administration plans to ensure the protection of U.S. airmen and the success of the airstrike mission that he is proposing without special operations forces serving in some kind of combat role?

Secretary HAGEL and General MAYVILLE. All airstrikes are coordinated through the Combined Air Operations Center. Through various intelligence collection assets,

a threat overlay is developed displaying the threats from surface to air missiles. These threats are incorporated in mission planning to mitigate to the greatest extent possible risks to the force; mitigations are attained primarily through avoidance of these areas and the use of standoff munitions to limit exposure to these anti-air threats. The tactics used by pilots are also designed to minimize their vulnerability to surface to air missiles and anti-air threats. For targets that are inside the threat rings of surface to air missiles or located in other high threat areas, detailed weaponeering is conducted to minimize the threat to aircraft. The use of standoff weapons systems such as Joint Air-to-Surface Stand-Off Missiles, Joint Stand-Off Weapons, sea-launched Tomahawk Cruise Missiles, and employment of stealth aircraft minimize the threat to personnel.

Dr. FLEMING. Since President Obama has taken office, our military has been cut by over \$1 trillion and is set to be cut by billions more before his term is complete. How does this administration intend to ensure that our soldiers have the training, resources, and equipment they need to be successful in meeting the President's stated objective of destroying ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. The Military Services will always ensure the forces that are deploying to engage in combat operations or train and assist operations are trained and equipped to meet the mission tasking. Specifically for the current operations to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Military Services, for the most part, have relied on forces already assigned to the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM). The Department is relying on Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding that is available under the Continuing Resolution to cover the costs of current operations. The Department, in coordination with the Office of Management and Budget, will evaluate the need to request additional OCO funding in fiscal year 2015 as requirements are better defined.

Dr. FLEMING. As part of his plan to destroy ISIL, the President has requested that Congress authorize the training and equipping of what this administration has called the "vetted, moderate Syrian opposition." Yet recent media reports have indicated that the founder of the Free Syrian Army has stated that it will not join the U.S.-led coalition to defeat ISIL because overthrowing Assad is its top priority.

What evidence can the administration provide that the opposition forces that the President intends to equip and train will focus its efforts on ISIL, rather than on Assad's forces? How does the possibility of the rebel opposition focusing on Assad square with this administration's stated goal of destroying ISIL? What is this administration's plan for eliminating ISIL if rebel forces focus on Assad rather than ISIL and other radical jihadist groups?

Secretary HAGEL. The program to train and equip Syrian moderate opposition forces is a multi-purpose effort designed to build a force capable of defending the Syrian population against extremist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as regime attacks; to stabilize areas under opposition control; and prepare trained forces to go on the offensive against ISIS. The initial priority is to fight ISIS, to the extent possible we will recruit from communities that are directly threatened by ISIS, or where forces will have the capacity and will to fight ISIS. More broadly, our goal is to ensure that the moderate opposition is in a position to hold territory from which ISIS is removed and, by strengthening opposition forces, to advance the conditions that will lead to a negotiated end to the Syrian conflict.

Dr. FLEMING. A major concern Congress and the American people have with arming and training this "vetted, moderate, Syrian opposition" is its relationship to other groups on the ground. Could you please describe the nature and level of political, diplomatic, economic, and military cooperation, integration or affiliation between the identified rebel forces and the following groups: ISIL, Al-Nusra, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Khorasan Group, and other Al Qaeda affiliates and radical jihadist groups.

Secretary HAGEL. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Dr. FLEMING. The constitutions and politicians we supported in Iraq and Afghanistan were not supportive of religious freedom. Are we going to change course on this matter? For example, are we going to include Christian militia groups and leaders, and perhaps other groups, or only Islamic militias? For example, one of the most prominent Christian militia groups is the Syriac Military Council. They control an area of free Syria. Will they be included in any approved weapons support and training support from us?

Secretary HAGEL. We have not yet identified the specific armed groups we will work with for the train-and-equip program. However, should Christian groups demonstrate interest in working with us, and be deemed appropriate recipients of U.S. support after being properly vetted, we could consider including them in the program.

Dr. FLEMING. Please give a detailed account of the coalition against ISIL that the administration has formed thus far, including the type and level of support from each country part of the coalition.

Secretary HAGEL. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CARSON

Mr. CARSON. We know that major terrorist groups like ISIL and Al Qaeda actively pursue an international profile—both to boost recruiting and to spread their extremist ideology. But I'm interested in understanding whether the split between ISIL and Al Qaeda has driven them into direct competition. Do you believe that the level of attention given to ISIL is encouraging Al Qaeda and others to branch out, as Al Qaeda recently did on the Indian subcontinent, or to act more violently to keep up? Are there any notable changes in Al Qaeda and other terrorist group activities that correspond with the rise of ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. [No answer was available at the time of printing.]

Mr. CARSON. President Obama made clear that ISIL is not a state. But are they taking any steps in pursuit of their statehood aspirations, like attempting to set up a government structure or provide public services? And if so, are we taking any steps to distinguish between ISIL fighters and those conscripted into these types of service positions in cities taken over by ISIL?

Secretary HAGEL. ISIL aspires to establish local governments and provide basic services to the populace in each city or district of Iraq and Syria it controls. ISIL seeks to form its governance based on strict Sharia law. ISIL's leadership structure in areas they control remains in-line with the group's overall structure; however, the group has given some responsibility to local citizens loyal to ISIL and empowered supportive tribal leaders to address grievances. Local government offices and medical services are operated and managed by ISIL members and loyalists.

At this time we are unable to accurately distinguish between ISIL cadre and local citizens working under ISIL control. This is largely due to the lack of detailed information on the people in ISIL controlled cities.

Mr. CARSON. What is the status of foreign military sales to Iraq? Are they on hold, proceeding normally, or being expedited to shore up the ISF? And after watching some of our equipment fall into ISIL's hands, what steps can be taken to ensure that any future equipment provided is not lost in the same way?

Secretary HAGEL. Since January, Iraq has requested additional equipment and services to aid in its campaign against ISIL. The USG has expedited delivery of more than 1,100 Hellfire missiles, 20,000 2.75-inch rockets, thousands of rounds of tank ammunition, thousands of machine guns, grenades, flares, small arms, and other equipment. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases are currently in development to provide additional Hellfire missiles, rockets, and other munitions as an immediate and effective tool against the threat. The formation of the new Iraq government, the strengthening and regeneration/reorganization of the ISF, and the increased U.S. advisory role will help ensure better security and employment of these critical capabilities.

Mr. CARSON. I would like some clarity on the role of special operations forces in this conflict with ISIL. Obviously, special operations encompasses a wide array of missions. But does the "no boots on the ground" assertion apply to short-term special operations missions, like the pursuit of a high value target? If so, what types of special operations may occur while still sticking to the "no boots on the ground" pledge?

Secretary HAGEL and General MAYVILLE. Special Operations play a central role in the conflict against ISIL. Counterterrorism, foreign internal defense, security forces assistance, counterinsurgency, and hostage rescue remain core activities for our Special Operations Forces. Nonetheless, the "no boots on the ground" policy applies to all operations, including Special Operations in Syria. However, our forces are capable of creating effects in Syria while not physically located there. U.S. Special Operations Forces conduct the core activities using specialized tactics, techniques, and procedures, and in unique conditions and to different standards, but in a manner that complements conventional capabilities. Special Operations Forces can tailor their capabilities in combinations with foreign forces that provide options for creating effects to achieve a broad range of strategic objectives. If the situation necessitates, the President and Secretary of Defense retain the authority to make an exception to this policy.